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Women's Experience as Women:
Meaning and Context

University — Université

U. of Alberta

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Ph D.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
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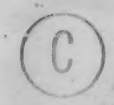
WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE AS WOMEN: MEANING AND CONTEXT

by



CHERYL LYNNE MALMO

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1983

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External Examiner

Date January 24, 1983

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my cousin, Lois Wells, who throughout her lifetime rejected the definition of women as Other and lived her life as a true Subject. Although she did not know it, she was a positive role model for me and I shall always remember and admire her independent spirit, her commitment to both her work and family, and her love of life.

Abstract

The concept of women as psychological Other, proposed by deBeauvoir in The Second Sex and assumed by many researchers to be an accurate description of women, is criticized for being simplistic and androcentric. In order to investigate the nature of women's psychological experience as women, this study used a phenomenological-type approach to examine the experiences of 13 women and the meaning to them of being women. A critical theory-type, feminist analysis was employed to examine the context of the participant's lives - factors which were dialectically related to their experiences as women. It was determined that the meanings women gave to their experiences could be categorized into six positive and six negative meanings. It was also determined that any one dimension of women's experience could result in a positive and/or negative meaning.

The negative meanings of being a woman were demonstrated to be related to women's experience of being defined or treated as Other. This did not necessarily mean that the women accepted the treatment as legitimate or identified with the definition of themselves as Other, however. Examination of the positive meanings revealed that the women experienced themselves psychologically as Subject in spite of their formal definition as Other and in ways that moved beyond the boundaries prescribed by the feminine stereotype or that challenged their formal definition. Further, it was demonstrated that what may appear on the surface to be behavior which reflects a woman's psychological experience of herself as Other may actually be a public accommodation to the feminine stereotype, employed as a coping stategy. Conversely, it was demonstrated that what on the surface may appear to be behavior which reflects a woman's psychological experience of herself as Subject may sometimes hide a private experience of Otherness.

It was concluded that women's psychological experience involved both their experience of themselves as Other and Subject, that this complexity existed on several dimensions at the same time, and, that depending on circumstance, it could both remain relatively constant and change over time. The need for research which examines both the meaning and context of experience (and which employs both phenomenological-type and critical theory-type methods) is affirmed.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the many people who contributed in many different ways to the success of this project. First, I wish to thank my examining committee:

Dr. John J. Mitchell (Chairperson), for allowing me the freedom to choose my topic and method, for respecting my commitment to feminism, and for so promptly reading and editing the various drafts of each chapter;

Dr. Dorothy Smith (External Examiner), for being a source of inspiration through her writings and talks, and for offering insightful suggestions about the direction this work should follow with regard to theory building;

Dr. W.H.O. Schmidt, who encouraged me to think critically about scientific method, gave concrete suggestions about the application of the phenomenological method to this topic, and so generously shared his wisdom;

Dr. Rosalind Sydie, who supported my feminist perspective and supported my belief in the importance of integrating the psychological and sociological perspectives;

Dr. Rosemary Liburd, who as a feminist therapist understood the importance of the case studies and the implications of the research for counselling women.

I wish also to thank the following people for their contribution to the content and production of the thesis:

Dr. Dallus Cullen, who served on the Candidacy Commitee, gave support and advice concerning the research method, and read the thesis and gave constructive criticism prior to the final oral examination;

Dr. Sydney Sharpe, who served on the Candidacy Commitee and gave insights from her studies in Anthropology;

Dr. Toni Laidlaw, a long-time friend and colleague who has inspired confidence and determination;

Ms. Josephine Milne-Home, a friend and fellow student who was always willing to discuss ideas and help with practical problems;

Ms. Laura Hargrave, who patiently transcribed most of the interviews;

Ms. Maureen Villetard, who painstakingly typed most of the case studies and chapters;

Ms. Betty Gibbs, who carefully edited the final draft;

The Killam Scholarship Fund, for three years of financial support.

As well I wish to thank several members of my family who gave constant emotional support and encouragement:

Ray Harper, my best friend, who gave both loving respect and practical assistance and who has always believed in me;

David Malmo-Levine and Ryan Malmo-Harper, my sons, who were understanding and patient and a constant source of joy and energy;.

Joyce Malmo and Oscar Malmo, my parents, who always believed that women are Subjects, and actively encouraged me to reject the definition of women as Other in my own life.

Finally, for their cooperation, time, and stories shared, I wish to thank the Subjects of the case studies: Joan, Beret, Sally, Theresa, Madelaine, Christine, Mary, Jean, Heidi, Marcela, Denise, Alice, and Elizabeth.

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I. Introduction

A. Starting Point: Concept of the 'Other'

The publication of Simone deBeauvoir's book, The Second Sex (English version, 1952), marked the beginning of an epoch in the study of women. In essence, deBeauvoir provided an analysis of the secondary place of women in relation to men, within patriarchal society. She demonstrated that women have always been subordinated to men – in the writings of history, myth, and literature, as well as in the writings of influential biologists, psychoanalysts, sociologists, and philosophers. In doing so, she not only provided ample evidence that women's inferiority was not innate, she also 'demystified' women by putting women's behavior into a social and historical context. She states,

> One is not born but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine. (p. 249)

deBeauvoir's contribution to our understanding of women's situation is unprecedented. Volumes of books and research articles from many disciplines support her contention that women have been (and still are) subordinate to men, that they are perceived and treated as "Other". However, deBeauvoir interpreted the concept of otherness to be a fundamental category of human thought, "as primordial as consciousness itself" (p. xvi). Basing her interpretation in Hegel's essentialist philosophy, she assumed that,

> We find in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility toward every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed – he sets Himself up as the essential, as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object (Hegel, cited by deBeauvoir, 1952, p. xvii).

To this assumption deBeauvoir added a new twist. She maintained that while men see themselves as subject and women as object – as Other, women do not make a reciprocal claim – they fail to see themselves as subject and men as object. This results from women's adoption of the male perspective of themselves as object in relation to men, and their acceptance of themselves as inferior. For deBeauvoir, women's identity rests on their acceptance of themselves as the second sex, viewed in relation to and therefore dependent upon men. In her words,

> The drama of women lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (ego) – who always regards the self as essential – and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential (1952, p. xxviii).

deBeauvoir recognizes that social factors work against women acting as subject. However, she sees the solution as residing within individual women. "If woman seems to be the inessential, it is because she herself fails to bring about this change" (p. xviii). Women are assumed to have the freedom to choose the terms of their existence.

There are some difficulties both with deBeauvoir's philosophical assumptions and with her theory of the psychology of women. One could argue that original conflict is not the basic dynamic of human psychology that deBeauvoir believes it to be. Miller (1976) suggests that the concept of "mankind" as basically self-seeking, competitive, aggressive, and destructive is based on an interpretation of the world as experienced by men. It overlooks the fact that millions of people, most of them women, have spent most of their lives giving to others. Of major concern to this study, however, is deBeauvoir's differentiation of women's psychology based on the assumption that women accept the dominant perception of themselves as Other., fail to see themselves as subject and men as object. This theory is sexist in that it assumes that the male experience, if indeed it is different, is somehow superior and represents the model for what is human. This theory is also simplistic because, even though it may be true that women do perceive themselves as Other on some levels, they may on other levels experience themselves as Subject. While devaluing themselves in some respects, they may in other ways, value themselves highly.

That deBeauvoir's theory is both sexist and simplistic derives from her perception of women from a male point-of-view. That she adopted a masculinist perspective in The Second Sex is easily demonstrated. In her chapter, "The Woman in Love," she quotes Byron and Nietzsche to demonstrate that loves means something different to women and men. Implicit to this is the sexist valuing of men as capable of something beyond the capacity of women (who are seen only in relation to men). Both points are demonstrated in the following:

> The single word love in fact signifies two different things for man and woman. What women understands by love is clear enough: it is not only devotion, it is a total gift of body and soul, without reservation, without regard for anything whatever. This unconditional nature of her love is what

> makes it a faith, [1]the only one she has. As for man, if he loves a woman, what he wants is that love from her; he is in consequence far from postulating the same sentiment for himself as for woman; if there should be men who also felt that desire for complete abandonment, upon my word, they would not be men. (Nietzsche, cited by deBeauvoir, 1952, pp. 603-604).

McCall (1979) suggests that deBeauvoir's writing was also influenced by her life-long companion, Jean-Paul Sartre. Certainly there is evidence in The Second Sex that deBeauvoir adopted Sartre's existential philosophy. She states, "I believe that she (woman) has the power to choose between the assertion of her transcendence and her alienation as object" (p. 45). Sartre's existentialism is based on a freedom asserted against nature, a nature embodied in the so-called female principle or feminine myth (McCall, 1979). deBeauvoir adopted this interpretation, evidenced in the following passage, "Man seeks in woman the Other as Nature and as his fellow being. But we know what ambivalent feelings Nature inspires in man" (p. 133). What deBeauvoir does not explore is the possibility of any other reality for women, other than that defined by men. Women's behavior was not examined in its own right - it was only perceived through male eyes and judged according to male values. A case can be made that, just as deBeauvoir's perception of women was limited because she viewed women only from a masculinist perspective, her theory of the psychology women was also limited. Felstiner's (1980) critique of deBeauvoir's concept of women as psychological Other supports this notion. She maintains that deBeauvoir did not deal with the diversity of women, did not recognize the various forms of women's power, and did not view the consciousness as a true dialectic between an individual and the course of events. While deBeauvoir has recognized the first two limitations of her theorizing, she apparently persists in her belief in the dependence of women's consciousness upon their formal definition. Felstiner states,

> Simone deBeauvoir now believes that she should have argued the primacy of social reality, of material conditions, over structure of consciousness (1980, pp. 265-266).

Consistently, throughout her writing, deBeauvoir uses the term "woman" rather than "women." For example, she refers to woman's libido (p. 35), woman's children (p. 75), woman is lost (p. 245), the sexual frustration of woman (p. 410), woman's temptation (p. 494), woman as victim (p. 579), the loving woman (p. 610). The concept

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[1]Nietzsche's emphasis

of "woman" as opposed to "women" is problematic in several ways. Sullerot (1971) explains that use of woman encourages the false perception that despite their diversity women are essentially similar. Further, seen only in relation to men (as Other), woman is easily perceived as the victim of male oppression and nothing more - hence as one-dimensional objects. Thus the stereotype of woman as submissive and passive, as reactive in relation to man's actions, is reinforced. Women who do not fit the stereotype are considered exceptions. Finally, use of "woman" requires that one think in abstractions rather than concrete specifics. This allows for the projection of the author's own experiences - perceptions, ideas, attitudes, feelings and values, without having to acknowledge them. By using woman, deBeauvoir adopted the masculinist perspective which views women as everywhere the same. Judging women from the male half of a sexually segregated world - from the public sphere of male-created ideology and male dominated institutions, she perceived women only as victims. Further, in the process of abstracting about "woman," she unwittingly projected her bias, her identification with the dominant male ideology, onto her study of women. In doing so, she failed to understand women whose lives were different from her own. It seems probable, therefore, that deBeauvoir's adoption of the existential belief that women had the power to choose their lifestyles, stems from a certain elitism - her failure to acknowledge that the alternatives and benefits available to herself were different from those available to most women (or to most men).

deBeauvoir's understanding of women's psychology was also limited by her adoption of the dominant (male) ideology's definition of women as Other. It is true that the perception of woman as Other reflects the official status of women in patriarchal society. Certainly women's position in the world at large has been perceived in terms of its otherness. Simmel (cited by Coser, 1977) claims that in male culture it is the social and psychological destiny of women to be treated and valued as means to the male end. He concludes, "Women, therefore, have a position in a world 'that is full of <u>otherness</u>' " (p. 874). It is important, however, to recognize that although women's formal status is that of Other, women do not necessarily experience their reality as it has been defined externally to them - psychology is not simply a reflection of sociology. It is this assumption, that the dominant ideology and formal structuring of society totally defines

women's psychological reality, that inherently limits deBeauvoir's understanding of women's psychology. Believing that the male-defined reality was the only reality, she assumed that women's psychology was a reflection of that reality. Thus, her view of women's psychological experience was limited to their accommodation to male-defined reality.

It is apparent that an understanding of the psychology of women requires an investigation of two dimensions of their experience: (a) the reality of women's lives and the personal meaning they give to their experience, and (b) the context of their experience including individual circumstances, social forces and ideology. Psychologists have been slow to recognize the importance of both areas. Personality theorists especially have tended to view behavior apart from its context, and rather, have attributed behavior to internal factors, to personality traits. In this way they supported the stereotypes, as deBeauvoir demonstrated. However, deBeauvoir's failure to examine the meaning of their personal experience to women (especially those different from herself), is equally serious. Rather than investigating women's actual experience of their realities, she examined only the formal structures of society and assumed that women's behaviour simply reflects their formal definition and status. Recognizing this as problematic, some historians (Hartman & Banner, 1974; Lerner, 1976; Scott & Tilly, 1975) have recommended that researchers distinguish between women's reality and the many myths that surround them, between their actual situation and their "proper place." That there is a discrepancy between the two is testified to in the following quote:

> A retired farmer from a French village remarked to a visiting anthropologist: "The husband is always the chef d'exploitation . . . well, that's what the law says. What really happens is another matter, but you won't find that registered in the Code Civil" (Scott & Tilly, 1975, p. 21).

It seems logical to conclude that if women's reality is more complex than that defined by the dominant ideology, then women's psychology will be more complex than simply a reaction to their formal definition.

In summary, it is acknowledged that deBeauvoir's concept of woman as the second sex, the Other, was significant in so far as that is how women are portrayed by the dominant ideology, that is their formal status. However, it is held that this is a limited view of women's experience and that the psychology of women is more complex than deBeauvoir understood it to be.

B. Purpose and Organization of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how women experience being women and what this means to them, within the context of their particular social situation, personal history, and cultural ideology. The topic has grown out of my personal life experience and reflections which lead me to think that women may experience a reality different from that defined in the dominant ideology or found in formal social structures. It is expected that the complexity of women's psychology will be uncovered: their experience of a reality apart from that formally defined, expected or imposed, and their perception of themselves as Subject, not just as Other. Further, it is expected that the importance of examining women's psychological experience (ie., the meaning they give to being women) within the context of their lives, will be demonstrated.

This study will consist of the presentation and analysis of case studies developed from intensive, in depth interviews using open-ended questions with 13 women. Because the method of research to be employed is not commonly used and not well understood, Chapter II will present a discussion of the development of scientific research methods, outlining the limitations of the empirical method and explaining the relevance of the phenomenological and critical theory methods employed in this study.

This study regards women as *subjects* rather than objects of research or as objects in relation to men – as participants in the research process. This means that the research material will come from women themselves, they will be actively involved in "telling their own story" – discussing their experiences from their own point of view. This study will attempt to examine women's experience within the context of their personal situations as well as within the broader context of patriarchal culture. Thus, the perspective is feminist. It is expected that the necessity of a feminist perspective in psychological research, in order to develop a psychology of women and to revitalize psychological theory in general, will be demonstrated. Because the meaning and relevance of a feminist perspective is not widely understood, Chapter III will present a discussion of historical and contemporary feminism and of feminist research in the social sciences generally and in psychology specifically.

Chapter IV will explain the research procedure including how the research questions were determined, how subjects were chosen, the interview process and the

process of analysis. Chapter V will include the 13 case studies. Because of problems with binding due to the length of the thesis, Chapter V has been bound separately in a second volume. The reader should feel free either to read the case studies in the order presented (i.e., as Chapter V), to read them after reading the theoretical chapters, or to refer to individual case studies as necessary when reading the theoretical chapters. It is expected that counsellors, researchers interested in the phenomenological method or in the study of language, and persons interested in individual women's various experiences as women will be most interested in the case studies. It should be noted that the case studies are presented as a chapter rather than as an appendix in order to emphasize that the individual participants' contribution in the interviews and their descriptions and interpretations of their experience as women is considered equally valuable as the analyses carried out by the author. Chapter VI will present the analysis of meanings of being a woman, and Chapter VII the analysis of the context of women's experience as women. Chapter VIII will include a discussion of the case studies, the analysis of meanings and the analysis of context of women's experience as women; and Chapter IX will draw conclusions and state implications.

II. Methodology

> We have already seen, however, that one of the things a scientific community acquires with a paradigm is a criterion for choosing problems that, while the paradigm is taken for granted, can be asumed to have solutions. To a great extent these are the only problems that the community will admit as scientific or encourage its members to undertake. Other problems, including many that had previously been standard, are rejected as metaphysical, as the concern of another discipline, or sometimes as just too problematic to be worth the time. A paradigm can, for that matter, even insulate the community from those socially important problems that are not reducible to the puzzle form, because they cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies (Kuhn, 1970, p.37).

A. The Logical Positivist, Empirical Method Criticized

Psychology has its roots in philosophy. Its research originally was concerned with perception and the processes of consciousness and its method was that of self-observation and introspection. Analysis was carried out by means of description and comparison and an attempt was made, with the aid of abstraction, to formulate general laws (Eysenk & Arnold, 1972). One goal of this science, as it developed in the eighteenth century, was to replace the authority of the church with a secular and scientific explanation of human problems. By examining the genesis of social ills and their *causal* inter-relationships, scientists believed they could produce a map of "right action" and "right conduct" according to objective, empirical principles (Becker, 1971). Further, they would be able to *predict* social events and *control* problem situations. Basic to this new philosophy of science was the idea of the unity of science - that there is a unity of scientific laws and a unity of method, hence that the laws of natural science are adequate for understanding human behavior.

Striving to establish itself as an independent and credible field of study able to produce general theories which could be used to predict and control human behavior, psychology adopted this positivist-based, empirical approach of the new science. To meet the standards of empirical science, matters under investigation had to be operationally defined and verified by a neutral observer. The method of self-reflection was considered to be undisciplinary speculation and was banished. Self-observation was replaced with observation by others. Experience could then be tested and

systematized. As a result, subjective experience and the circumstances of individual lives were reified as "facts" in causal relation to other "facts". And because it is individuals and not facts who make connections, the dimension of *meaning* as experienced directly by individuals in their everyday worlds was lost (Eysenk & Arnold, 1972).

Also problematic for the study of meaning are the positivist-based, scientific requirements that problems be solvable according to the rules of analytical logic, and the belief that there are two kinds of knowledge or meaning: cognitive and emotive. Cognitive meaning is considered to be characteristic of scientific discourse, is capable of being true or false, and conveys beliefs; emotive meaning is considered to be characteristic of the discourse of politics, religion, morality and art, and conveys attitudes. Problems that could not be operationalized and investigated according to this logical approach – problems too complex or involving the metaphysical – were considered to be meaningless and labelled "pseudoproblems" (Kaplan, 1968). Thus, the logical truth arrived at by definition usually excluded the world of emotion.

The influence of this philosophy is evidenced especially in the method of psychology – a method which requires an objective and logical approach and which assumes that:

1. theory derives from a rational understanding of related facts that can be reduced to a model or system,
2. matters under investigation must be operationally defined and measured,
3. verification of a theory must be made by a neutral observer, and
4. the resulting knowledge enables scientists to predict and control human behavior, in short, "to *manipulate*[2] the processes of nature" (Eysenk & Arnold, 1972, p.4).

It is this version of science, based in the philosophy of logical positivism or logical empiricism, that has been adopted by the vast majority of psychologists in North America today; this is "established" or mainstream psychology.

What is regarded as "acceptable" research method in psychology is further limited by an attitude that developed in some quarters, that empirical science was capable of solving *all* problems of human existence, a belief that science could

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[2]Eysenk & Arnold's emphasis

guarantee an unlimited *control* of nature, and an assertion that there were *no other* realities than those investigated by the *natural* sciences. This attitude is referred to as "scientism" (Giorgi, 1970). Under scientism, the scientific method (as it was developed in the natural sciences under the empirical paradigm) becomes the *only* acceptable method of inquiry, regardless of the subject matter. This attitude has been keenly felt in most graduate schools of psychology in North America today, and is reflected in the fact that in the vast majority of psychology departments, courses on research methodology assume a logical positivist philosophy and are limited to investigation using traditional empirical methods. (It is this scientistic attitude, in fact, that has made necessary the writing of this chapter on methodology.) Whilst the positivist influence has undoubtedly provided an important emphasis on clarity of ideas and precision of thinking, it has also been effective in limiting our method of inquiry. In the words of Kaplan (1968),

> too much self-consciousness as to methodology may have a repressive effect on the conduct of scientific inquiry. Unintentionally, and even contrary to its own purposes, modern positivism may have contributed to a *myth of methodology*:[3] that it does not much matter what we do if only we do it right (p.394).

The study of the philosophy of science encourages reflection upon the assumptions made by any particular approach to knowledge. It is largely from this discipline that criticism of the established scientific community has arisen. One of the most renowned of these critics is Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn maintains that implicit within any science are paradigms – "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners" (1970, p. viii). However, while paradigms serve the purpose of defining problems and methods of research, they are problematic in that they also present barriers to knowledge by restricting our thinking and methods of research. Social science research method has been greatly influenced by the once prevailing Newtonian paradigm in the natural sciences. Investigators strived to attain objectivity in method, thereby achieving the status of a "true" science. Since Einstein's elaboration of the Theory of Relativity, the natural sciences have partially disregarded the Newtonian paradigm. The social sciences, however, especially psychology, have continued to follow this paradigm, maintaining that

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[3] Kaplan's emphasis

objective and detached measurement is the most defensible form of knowledge. There appears to be a parallel between religious converts who rigidly adhere to the rules and tenets of their new religion, and psychologists who have adopted the laws of natural science.

Not surprisingly, the empirical approach and its application to the human sciences is being criticized by numerous researchers today. The scientistic claim that it is the *only* legitimate method of intellectual inquiry is being seriously challenged. And its claim to objectivity and neutrality is being criticized as being naive and even dangerous. Giorgi (1970) claims that scientific psychology, in attempting to imitate the practises and aims of natural science, chose a method before it knew its problems; and that the concepts, methods and approaches used are inadequate for a study of human experience. As Roche (1973) states, "Logical empiricism imports into the humanities standards of crystal clarity and criteria of empirical proof and disproof which belong elsewhere" (p.103). In other words, the reductionist method of natural science (everything is reduced to a physics model) has not investigated certain dimensions of human experience because the method itself did not allow for that. Thus the scientific or empirical method is considered by some to be not only limiting but as incapable of exploring many essentially human dimensions. Unfortunately, however, the empirical method too often seems to be the determining factor in our quest for knowledge. Giorgi states, "Too often phenomena are studied more on the basis of the availability of methods than on how the phenomena appear and what they would require (1970, p.83). The scientific establishment tends either to be intolerant of ideas that cannot be researched using the empirical method or may fail to perceive that particular problems exist because these problems do not suit the method. Thus, certain phenomena which cannot be examined by the methods provided by the ruling paradigm, have not been studied.

van Kaam (1966) concludes that exclusive use of the objective method has not only limited our study of human behavior, but has actually distorted our understanding of human experience. He maintains that a human science which restricts itself to only objective and detached measurement will replace, erase and distort human experience and finally become irrelevant to human life. In his words,

> A preconceived empirical, experimental or statistical method may distort rather than disclose a given behavior through an imposition of restricted theoretical constructs on the full meaning and richness of human behavior (p.14).

This is already a problem in psychology. Experimental psychology, in its efforts to be objective, deliberately avoids the matters of subjective meaning, ie., the meaning of behavior to the person behaving or the meaning of action as experienced by the actor. In the process of labelling and categorizing experience, it changes the dynamic life process into static "facts." Thus, in striving to meet the rigorous standards of empirical science, psychologists have come to believe that:

1. subjective meaning is contaminating,
2. the larger human context (social, historical, cultural, political) is virtually impossible to assess scientifically, and
3. the best way to study human beings is to dissect them into essential but observable variables.

Thus, the dimensions of human experience that have been neglected are:

1. subjective *meaning* or the meaning of experience as understood by the person experiencing,
2. the wide and variable *contexts* of human lives, and
3. the *process* of behavior as it occurs over time.

It has been understood for some time that the dimensions of meaning and context were essential to our understanding of human experience. For example, Boring wrote that in the late 1800's, "laboratory atmospheres" were repeatedly found to affect the results of studies, no matter the problem. And certainly the more recent studies by Milgram and by Rosenthal have demonstrated that in order to understand human behavior we must understand its context and the meaning it has for individuals (Sherif, 1979a). Still, the relevance of these dimensions continues to be ignored as experimental psychologists continue to "control" for them. The implications of research methodology neglecting the dynamic aspect of behavior have just recently been understood. Riegel (1978) explains how the empirical approach denies an essential aspect of human experience: that life is an on-going *process* - an ever-changing movement of experience over time. He maintains that in the process of searching for universal conditions of mind and society, mainstream experimental and social psychologists

disregard individual and cultural differences and developmental and historical changes. As a result they study only *static* behavior. Individuals and groups are viewed as if in a "developmental and historical vacuum" (p.23). Of the experts in psychology he vividly writes, "They have nailed the individual right onto the cross, onto the crossing point of developmental and historical time" (p.64).

The assumption of the empirical approach, that science is neutral, is also problematic. Giorgi (1970) brings to our attention the failure of empirical psychology to reflect upon the researcher and the assumptions she/he makes. He maintains that there is no such thing as pure fact: all facts are selected and interpreted by researchers who only grasp certain aspects of reality, depending upon their point of view. Therefore, it is essential not only to note the presence of researchers, but also to know about them – their assumptions, expectations, values, priorities, etc.. As Giorgi states,

> It is not enough merely to note that the researcher is there, but one has to know in what manner he is there, what he expects to find, how he designed the experiment, why he chose the variables he did, etc. (1970, p.97).

Also neglected (or avoided) is the question of the ethical responsibility of social scientists. Rarely do empirical scientists ask: What is the purpose of research? Whom does it serve? To what end? The assumption, kept strictly undercover, is that because the facts are objective and the knowledge neutral, that scientists, too, are neutral and are therefore independent of how knowledge is "used". Schroyer (1970) is concerned that contemporary science and technology have become dangerous in that they represent a new form of legitimating power and privilege. He states,

> In so far as the practise of the scientific establishment is held to be neutral, while actually justifying the extension of repressive control systems, we can assert that the contemporary self-image of science functions as a *technocratic ideology* [4] (p.210).

It appears that the claim of neutrality by mainstream social scientists must be seen as problematic in this sense also. Further, it seems reasonable that a method must be formulated which takes into account the assumptions of the researcher and the purpose of research, and which makes explicit the political ends which it serves. Two research methods that are alternatives to the experimental, empirical approach will now be discussed. These methods are relevant to this study because they allow for the examination of subjective human experience (meaning) and the broader social reality

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[4]Scroyer's emphasis

(context).

B. Meaning and the Experiencing Subject

The study of the subjective dimension of human behavior has its roots in phenomenology – a philosophical method originated by Brentano in 1874 and later revised by his student, Husserl. It was perceived first as a complement and finally as a challenge to logical positivism, which it criticized for being excessively reductionistic and mechanistic. Brentano and Husserl believed that mental phenomena has a distinct existence, as do physical phenomena; and that consciousness is an activity that can be explored and described by the subject, and understood by others because it is intentional. The theory and method of this exploration of subjective experience was further developed by the followers of Husserl: Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Schutz, who came to be known as existential phenomenologists (Roche, 1973).

The phenomenological method involves a philosophical reflecting upon concrete, lived experience – an attempt to use the uniquely human intuitive process to understand human behavior in its immediacy. Phenomenological psychology is defined by van Kaam (1966) as follows:

> Phenomenological psychology, in its broadest definition, is an attempt to return to the immediate meaning and structure of behavior as it actually presents itself. Phenomenology as a method in psychology thus seeks to disclose and elucidate the phenomena of behavior as they manifest themselves in their perceived immediacy (p.15).

Thus, phenomenology is designed to study the essential *human* element, to explore a dimension of reality not researched in the natural sciences and not available to the natural science based, empirical method.

The phenomenological method requires an approach different from the empirical method. Whereas the empirical approach takes concepts, viewpoints and techniques from the natural sciences and applies them to human phenomena; the phenomenological approach goes directly to human phenomena, to the lived, day-to-day world of human subjects. The goal is to *understand*, rather than to explain. Concepts and methods emerge as a necessary result of the study (Giorgi, 1970). The procedure is to first explore the human situation as it is lived and experienced by the subjects, then to

provide a qualitative description of the subjects' experiences and its meaning to them. Thus, the phenomenological method operates at the pre-experimental and pre-theoretical level. Rather than measuring stimuli and responses, it investigates encounters, life-worlds and meanings (van Manen, 1977). Hypotheses and theories are generated as the *end result* of the process. Construct validity is achieved in so far as the internal logic of the subjects' experiences and the meaning they give to these experiences, becomes apparent through their constructions of their life stories and how the past and present and the various aspects of their lives inter-relate. Concurrent validity is achieved if equally sensitive and skilled researchers elicit similar information and make similar analyses. However, reliability is likely not to be achieved, simply because people are assumed to *change* over time- change being part of what it is to be human and alive. In fact, it is expected that the process of the interview itself - the interaction between interviewer and subjects, and the reflection of the subjects upon their own lives - will likely stimulate some degree of change.

Interest in the phenomenological approach to research is growing as academics with a humanist bent become dissatisfied with the limitations of the empirical approach. In education (Apple, 1980; Tabachnick, Popkewitz & Zeichner, 1979-1980) and in organizational management (van Maanen, 1979) we see examples of what is being termed, "qualitative method". According to Argyris (1979), qualitative data involves subjective meaning, has its own implicit logic, and enables us to *understand* complex processes. Unlike quantitative data, it does not measure or sample and, therefore, it is not useful for predicting trends. In sociology and anthropology we hear of "ethnomethodology" (Garfinkel, 1967) or "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Garfinkel (1967) defines ethnomethodology as "the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent on-going accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life" (p.11). Grounded theory is described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as theory arising from data which is systematically obtained and analyzed, in contrast with theory generated by logical deduction from apriori assumptions.

In psychology we have examples of how theory arises from experience, although these examples come mainly from those who studied and worked in Europe. As is

widely known, Sigmund Freud formulated psychoanalytic theory based on his experiences treating neurotic patients. His theoretical hypotheses were inferred from the findings of his investigations (Richards, 1976). Although he made many assumptions from the logical empiricist position (for example, that the human psyche can be explained by a physics model, that psychic energy is contained in a closed system and that behavior is biologically determined), he nevertheless begins from his experience in formulating theory. Therefore, his method is in this sense, phenomenological. Freud is also considered a phenomenologist because he was concerned with the *meaning* his patients gave to their experience (Eysenk & Arnold, 1972).[5] Like Freud, Jean Piaget used his own observations as the basis for his theory (of cognitive development). His method was to observe children's behavior in their natural environment, and *subsequently* to formulate hypotheses concerning the structure and function of the intellect (Phillips, 1969). While he, too, assumed a model (of cognition) analagous to a natural science model, his method included phenomenological techniques, nonetheless. Viktor Frankl, too, derived theory from experience – his own personal experience as a prisoner of war in a Nazi concentration camp. On the basis of this experience he developed a theory (that striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational source in humans), and a method of treatment which he termed Logotherapy, based on his theory. (Frankl, 1963).

In North America the phenomenological approach is most visible as a clinical method employed by Third Force or humanistic psychologists. For example, client-centered therapy or phenomenological psychology was developed by Carl Rogers, and is both a means of treatment and a means of understanding personality (Meador & Rogers, 1973). Also based on the phenomenological approach are theories on communication and group behavior which focus on process, interactions or patterns of behavior, rather than on a static model (Cathcart and Samover, 1970). As a research method per se, the phenomenological method is not viewed as scientific by the positivist-based mainstream. Giorgi (1970) explains: "the mistaken notion that if one is interested in the whole person then it is not possible to be scientific is still too

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[5] Lerman's (1980) investigation of Freud from a psycho-historical point of view challenges the observational basis of his theory as regards women's sexual development, however. Her findings will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter III.

prevalent" (p.xi). Sherif (1979a) outlines what she describes as "the ideology of psychology's elite" (p.98): that work outside of the laboratory is suspect and that research in naturalistic settings is regarded as necessarily less "pure" even "contaminated".

C. Context and the Experiencing Subject

The study of the context of human behavior is rooted in the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, and the thinking of Horkheimer, Habermas, Adorno and Marcuse. Critical theory began as a reaction to scientism and its resulting technological ideology. The danger of the positivist ideology, according to the Frankfurt theorists, was that it supported an exclusively technical civilization, devoid of any connection between theory and praxis. Further, people were being split into two classes: social engineers - those with knowledge, and inmates of closed institutions - those without knowledge (van Manen, 1977). The knowledge itself was also seen to be problematic. According to Habermas, scientific knowledge had been reduced to a certain kind of knowledge - a one-dimensional, empirical-analyical knowledge. Moral-ethical problems were not considered by the empiricists. Therefore, it was the narrowly defined empirical knowledge that maintained society - maintained the social/political/economic structures and institutions, as well as the ideology. Scientific knowledge was also perceived as limited because it separated social reality into formal, academic disciplines and consequently failed to examine the larger units of human experience. Frankfurt theorists understood the necessity of comprehending total phenomena and believed that one could not hope to conceptualize the whole by "biting off tiny pieces and concentrating on them alone" (Becker, 1971, p.81).

Thus, like Husserl, the Frankfurt theorists were "critical of the positivistic and objectivistic tendencies that were increasingly affecting all intellectual disciplines" (Bernstein, 1976, p.179). However, they were skeptical of Husserl's phenomenology, believing that it fell short in its analysis of the nature of communication. From this point a different emphasis developed. Whereas phenomenology seeks to understand the *meaning* of behavior as intended and experienced by the subject; critical theory examines historical and social structures, and the subsystems of society (*context*),

seeking to discover how individuals are subjected to distorted communication that lies within the structures. Critical theorists hold that because individuals are subjected to distorted communication and may be unconscious of how they are affected by both historical and contemporary structures of society, critical theory is essential to achieving critical consciousness. Marcuse has defined critical thought as follows:

> By criticism we mean that intellectual, and eventually practical effort which is not satisfied to accept the prevailing ideas, actions and social conditions unthinkingly and from mere habit; effort which aims to coordinate the individual sides of social life with each other and with the general ideas and aims of the epoch, to deduce them genetically, to distinguish the appearance from the essence, to examine the foundation of things, in short to really know them (cited by Bernstein, 1976, p.180).

Critical theory, therefore, has a fundamental, practical interest that guides it – a practical interest in improving human existence, in striving for enlightenment and liberation, in achieving personal, social and political change. Thus, its purpose, generally, is to connect theory with praxis; and specifically, is to provide all members of society with a critical consciousness of the ideologies, structures and institutions which are oppressive to individuals and groups. Its aim is to effect change in the social/political structures and institutions by constructing new social theories, implicitly challenging to the dominant social theories and ideologies which maintain the established society (Gouldner, 1970).

The method of critical theory – critical analysis – is to situate human behavior in an historical/cultural/ social context, using philosophic reflection. Critical analysis, therefore, can be understood as a philosophic examination of the structures and subsystems of society (including ideology) which affect individuals. In doing so it crosses the barriers erected by the formal academic disciplines – the disciplines initiated and maintained by the positivists (Becker, 1971). Further, critical analysis provides an explanatory power and a direction for action – a dimension ignored by positivists and not available to phenomenologists.

Most academics have become familiar with critical analysis through the writings of Karl Marx. Marx critiqued the economic, political, social and ideological dimensions of capitalist society and proposed particular strategies for change. How these factors were related to human experience and psychological problems was later investigated by certain European psychotherapists influenced by Marx. Wilhelm Reich, for example,

deplored the separation of psychoanalysis from the practical social and political problems that surround it. He viewed Freud's concept of the oedipus complex not as an historical, biologically-based given, but as a product of the patriarchal family where incest is simultaneously tabooed and encouraged: "the psychic representation of the patriarchal nuclear family" (Mitchell, 1975, p.174). Reich was convinced that the cause of neurotic illness in society was to be found in the social, economic, political and ideological structures of capitalist society. Thus, he looked beyond particular individuals, to the structures of society, for the "causes" of certain behaviors; and he found a solution in social action.

In North America, critical analysis is used extensively in sociology, especially in relation to economic and political theory. In education, too, there is an active force (Holt, Kohl, Friedenberg, Goodman, Illich, Freire) which uses critical analysis as a method of situating education, with its present structure and functions, in the larger contexts of society - of relating education to the economic, political and ideological dimensions that affect it (Rich, 1975). This force is generally considered to be apart from mainstream education theory, however. Feminist theory has also been influenced by a critical theory approach to understanding the situation of women. (More will be said about that in the following chapter.) In psychology, critical analysis, like phenomenology, has been used to a limited extent by clinical practitioners; by those practitioners who have come to believe that political and social systems can be oppressive to individuals and that therapy which attempts to help people adjust to oppressive circumstances perpetuates oppression. Therapy for these practitioners focuses on *change* rather than adjustment. "Radical therapists", for example, believe that therapy involves change - change that takes place not only at the personal level but also at the social and political levels (Agel, 1971). Scientific mainstream psychology, however, continues to discount the context of behavior, by controlling for it, and concentrating instead on behavioral variables that can be operationally defined, measured and tested. Further, in striving to be objective, neutral and pure, mainstream psychology avoids acknowledging the political, and thus inadvertently perpetuates the status quo.

D. A Dialectic Approach: Understanding Meaning and Context

This study will involve both an exploration of meaning as experienced directly by the subjects under investigation, and an analysis of the context in which that meaning is experienced. The method is dialectic in that the relationship between meaning and context will be explored. In other words, meaning and context are perceived as two separate dimensions of understanding which are assumed to interact. The effect of this interaction will become apparent to the investigator in the research participants' responses to the interview questions. Participants will be conscious in various degrees of the interaction of meaning and context in their own lives.

The advantage to examining both meaning and context becomes apparent when we review the shortcomings of those theorists who investigated only one of the two. Sigmund Freud employed a phenomenological approach when he attempted to examine the meaning of people's behavior to them. However, he did not examine context and, therefore, failed to understand that the oedipus complex, which he assumed to be universal, was a product of the nineteenth century, middle-class, patriarchal, nuclear family. Jean Piaget also assumed that the cognitive structure he "discovered" was universal, because he did not recognize the extent to which cognition could vary according to class and culture. On the other hand, critical analysis of context without an examination of subjective experience can also limit understanding. For example, Karl Marx did not examine the dimension of personal experience, believing this to be unimportant in the struggle for liberation. As a result, he failed to account for people's differing values and the meaning they attributed to work. Women's role in production was given the same analysis as was given men's, in spite of women's obviously greater role in reproduction. Further, Marx mistakenly concluded that women's sexuality, being a part of the forbidden personal dimension, was not an important issue in the fight for liberation. This he concluded in spite of the belief of his female comrades, such as Alexandra Kollantai (1972), that women's freedom from sexual oppression was central to their liberation. One might conclude that Marx did not examine the personal dimension (stereotypically perceived as women's sphere), and did not examine the meaning of women's experience to women, because they were not real to him, as a man. William Reich also failed to explore subjective experience - the meaning of people's experience

to themselves. He assumed that repressed sexuality was the basis of all neurosis in capitalist society, and did not understand that many people were suffering from psychological problems related to poverty and poor working conditions.

A few European researchers, however, did examine both meaning and context. Karen Horney (1926 1939, 1967) began her criticism of psychoanalytic theory because she found that her patients spoke of problems which Freud's psychoanalysis did not speak to. Being conceptually dissatisfied, she rejected Freud's anatomical-physiological orientation and adopted a sociological orientation, searching amongst life conditions and environmental factors for the source of neurotic conflicts (Horney, 1939). In following this sequence, Horney exemplifies what is being referred to in this study as a dialectic approach. We also see with R.D. Laing (1965) a concern for examining both meaning and context. Laing was critical of the natural sciences and also of psychoanalysis because they both treated people as "objects" of study. He turned to phenomenology as a means to break down the defense barrier between himself (as scientist) and his psychotic patient (the subject of his research). Next he turned to sociology in an effort to establish the original cause of mental illness in the social realm – specifically, in the family structure and relationships of the patient to family members (Mitchell, 1975).

In North America, too, there are examples of theorists who have investigated both the meaning of experience to those who are experiencing, and the social forces which effect the experiencer. Thomas Szasz is widely known for his criticism of Western medical ideology which perceives people in emotional pain to be suffereing from a disease, and labels them as mentally ill. Understanding the subjective experience of patients, he examined the psychiatric structures which label, treat and in effect create mental patients (Szasz, 1961, 1970). Eric Fromm also brought together the meaning and context dimensions. He examined the structure, qualities and potentialities of human experience as well as contemporary social, political and economic problems, producing an analysis of how society has become the product of a dehumanized technology. He explains that it is necessary to look at both dimensions in order that the problems of people in society can be thoroughly understood. However, he also realizes that the process of integrating the various dimensions is unfamiliar to most – that we are, rather, in the habit of compartmentalizing psychology, sociology and politics (Fromm, 1968).

The concern with the methods of phenomenology and critical analysis in this study is not a concern with the methods per se (i.e., in their classical or most popular forms). Rather, the concern is to make clear the *kinds of knowledge* to be gained by using a version of the methods – versions adapted to serve the purpose of this particular investigation. It may be, in fact, that the process of examining both meaning and context of experience and how they inter-relate is a major departure from the methods as they were originally developed. This study is also a departure from "typical" psychological studies because it explores beyond the boundaries of the discipline of psychology (as practised in most North American universities) for clues to understanding. Further, this study is atypical in that it examines a dynamic, on-going process – the interaction of meaning and context and the past and present experience of the subjects. The focus of this thesis, therefore, is in the direction of understanding experience as an ever-changing *process* of interaction as participants are acted upon and act upon their environments over their lifetime.

III. The Feminist Perspective

> At its best, feminist writing fulfills three functions: it is critical of existent social structures and ways to perceive them, it serves as a corrective mechanism by providing an alternative viewpoint and data to substantiate it, and it starts to lay the groundwork for a transformation of social science and society (Eichler, 1980, p.9).

A. Historical and Contemporary Feminism

Throughout history certain women (and sometimes men too) spoke out against the dominant ideology which held women to be inferior. Their point of view was invariably different from that of the dominant male group. Theirs was the point of view of women, conscious of their subordinate status and resulting oppression under patriarchy – a feminist perspective. They challenged traditional ideas and practices in an attempt to broaden society's limited view of women's "nature" and potential, and introduced new ideas as regards social change. It is this *process* of feminism, women's reaction against their subordination under patriarchy, that is constant over time and across cultures. However, it is important to understand that feminism has taken many different forms, depending upon the nature of women's oppression in any given place and time, and upon the nature of change called for by the feminists.

The *content* of feminism, what is reacted to and what specific changes are proposed, varies with time and place according to the particular ideologies and structures of specific cultures and societies. Each feminist reaction is likely to speak to manifestations of sexism within that society. Each feminist proposal for change is an outgrowth of a particular cultural context. Further, within any given society, feminism will vary according to how individual women experience their oppression under patriarchy, and how they choose to take action to effect change. Assumptions as to the "nature" of women and women's potential also change, depending upon the knowledge available and the experiences and consciousness of individual feminists.

An historical view of feminism is essential in order to illustrate the following: feminism is a changing and developing ideology based on women's perspective of their experience under a patriarcal system, feminism challenges traditional thought and practices of patriarchal societies which formally or informally exclude and devalue

women, and the form feminism takes is directly related to the social/political/cultural context from which it evolves.

Contemporary feminism has assumed a variety of forms as it developed in the consciousness and behavior of individual women, and in the Women's Liberation Movement throughout the 1960's and 1970's. Bardwick (1979) defines contemporary feminism as follows: "Feminism is an explicit rejection of the lifestyle created by strongly coercive norms that define and restrict what women are and can do" (p.5). She distinguishes three kinds of present day feminists:

1. *conservative* feminists, essentially content with the status quo but wishing some change in their personal lives, such as redistribution of housework or equal pay for equal work;
2. *reformist* feminists, who wish to retain but modify the institutions of society (educational, legal, religious, etc.); and
3. *radical* feminists, who claim that society needs basic changes in many vital institutions.

Both reformist and radical feminists look beyond personal goals and solutions to rectify women's subordinate position and both are concerned with institutional or cultural sexism (sexism being defined by Bardwick as "the conscious or unconscious assumption that whatever is 'masculine' is intrinsically better than anything 'feminine' " (1979, p.5)).

Of significance in contemporary feminism is its movement from street demonstrations, consciousness-raising groups and popular literature, to the hallowed halls of academia. In the late 1960's and early 1970's in North America, feminist activity centered primarily on the personal growth of individual women who were becoming conscious of their oppression and of the phenomenon of sisterhood, and on women's organizing to expose sexism and discrimination against women and to demand equal opportunity. The movement of feminism into social science research, university courses, professional organizations and academic journals has resulted in further development in feminist thinking. This development involves examination of: the underlying philosophies and assumptions of patriarchy itself – the ideology which creates and maintains the perception of women as Other; the institutions which structure male dominance and female subordination; and the social sciences which is, in many

respects, the study of men, by men, for men.

B. Feminist Research in the Social Sciences

The feminist perspective begins with the following points as givens:

1. that the formal institutions of society are male-dominated and male-oriented,
2. that women hold a secondary status in relation to men,
3. that the dominant ideology reflects and supports the perception of women as subordinate to and less valuable than men, and
4. that women have been discriminated against and oppressed on the basis of sex.

Feminism is a reaction against sexism. Social science, having developed within a patriarchal context, reflects numerous masculinist biases present in the larger society.

That social science research has traditionally treated women as Other is well established (deBeauvoir, 1952; Bernard, 1973a, 1979; Carlson, 1971, 1972; Eichler, 1973, 1977, 1980; Frieze, Parsons, Johnson, Ruble & Zellman, 1978; Millman and Kanter, 1975; Sherif, 1979a, 1979b; Siveira, 1973; Smith, 1974, 1975, 1977b, 1979a; Thorne and Henley, 1975; Weisstein, 1971). It has focused on problems primarily relevant to males, questioned issues and interpreted findings from a male perspective, and made intellectual judgments according to male-determined values. As a result, traditional social science research has reinforced society's belief that women are, indeed, the Other. From the feminist perspective has grown a new body of research - feminist research. It differs from traditional research in that the patriarchal assumption of women as subordinate is rejected. Rather than perceiving women as Other in relation to men, women are perceived as subject of *their own* story. This necessarily requires that women be perceived as dynamic and interactive subjects rather than as passive or static objects of research. Further, an attempt is made to understand women's experience from women's point of view rather than simply in terms of a male-defined reality or in relation to an assumed male norm. Eichler (1977) defines feminist research as follows:

> I shall here consider such research feminist that regards women as subjects rather than objects; it does not treat men as the norm and women as deviation from the norm. Nor does it legitimize its concern with women in terms of some problems of a "higher order"; instead it reconstructs reality by starting from a female perspective which may or may not need to be

modified as men are taken into consideration. (p.410)

Inherent to feminist research is a criticism of traditional male-biased theory and, as well, the presentation of an alternative female perspective. New purposes and criteria have to be established. Many traditional theories may be rejected or reinterpreted. Methodology must be examined and new approaches investigated. The new perspective challenges the status quo and offers alternatives. In doing so it is making conscious the ideas and practices which create and maintain the perception of women as "Other".

Feminist research has already exerted a direct influence on contemporary social science. Feminist researchers have demonstrated that traditional anthropological research focused excessively on male activities, often excluding women altogether, and consistently viewed men as more advanced than women, crediting men as being the "creators and carriers" of culture (Rosaldo, 1974). Women's physiological involvement in child-bearing and the relationship of their social roles to bodily functions led to the association of women with nature (Ortner, 1974). The consistent valuing of males over females was justified on the bases that women's biologically-based "uncivilized" behavior was interpreted to be less sophisticated than men's achievements in social institutions. Further, women's secondary status was accepted as one of the "true universals" in the eyes of nineteenth century scholars (Darwin, Bachofen, Morgan, Engels), who mistook the myth of matriarchy for history and assumed that matriarchy gave way to patriarchy because women were inferior to men. In addition, these nineteenth century ethnographers imposed upon their observations Victorian attitudes and values which held that nature and the sexuality of women must be subordinated to the superior reason and will of men (Bamberger, 1974; Ortner, 1974; Rosaldo, 1974).

It is evident that traditional male anthropologists, although they claimed to observe cultures in a neutral and objective manner, were extremely ethnocentric. They imposed their own structures, values and interpretations on what they saw, and consistently attributed greater worth to men's activities. Assumptions were made about women's "proper place" and women were not studied directly. As a result of feminist inquiry, the validity of much traditional anthropology is now questioned in a more systematic and comprehensive manner than ever before. The deficiency of traditional anthropological studies which have typically failed to consider women's perspective has been

demonstrated. The problems are both analytical and technical, according to Edwin Ardener (1975). He explains:

> The fact that no one could come back from an ethnographic study of "the X", having talked only *to* women, and *about*[6] men, without professional comment and some self-doubt. The reverse can and does happen constantly. . . . Indeed the astounding deficiency of a method, supposedly objective, is starkly revealed; the failure to include half the people in the total analysis. (pp.3-4)

Some feminist historians are criticizing traditional history for its inadequate treatment of women, its failure to understand women's situation and its consistent focusing on the activities of men. Kelly-Gadol (1976) explains,

> Traditional history lacks an understanding of women's situation because it has considered civilization to be making war, wealth, laws, government, art, and science, all activities that women have been largely excluded from (p.810).

This has resulted in a major distortion of historical theory and knowledge (Kelly-Gadol, 1976; Lerner, 1976a, 1976b, 1977; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). Gordon, Buble & Dye (1976) attribute traditional historians' neglect of women to their male-orientation as to what is historically significant, explaining that:

> Their categories and periodization have been masculine by definition, for they have defined significance primarily by power, influence and visible activity in the world of political and economic affairs. (p.175)

The feminist perspective in history has brought about a major breakthrough in academic analysis of women's history. Women have finally come to be recognized as a distinct group whose study can contribute to a new appreciation of the history of all of humankind. As Kelly-Gadol (1976) states, "We have made of sex a category as fundamental to our analysis of the social order as other categories such as class and race" (p.816). Women's history has shaken the conceptual foundations of historical study by making problematic three of the basic concerns of historical thought: periodization, categories of social analysis, and theories of social change. For example, Kelly-Gadol (1977) has revolutionized historical periodization by demonstrating that

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[6]Ardener's emphasis

during the Renaissance (a period formerly understood to be liberating for men and assumed also to be liberating for women), women's options were generally reduced by the creation of new forms of political and social organization. She concludes that "events that further the historical development of men, liberating them from natural, social or ideological constraints, have quite different, even opposite effects on women" (p.139). Thus, a feminist perspective has revitalized historical thought in general, creating a new history as well as a new history of women.

In traditional sociology, women's experience has been largely ignored. Perceiving women as belonging to the domestic sphere, as apart from the highly valued formal structures and institutions of the public sphere, sociologists generally excluded women from direct study. Therefore, most of what is known as the study of society, is the male study of male society (Bernard, 1973a). Most definitions in sociology were based on male experience. For example, *work* was defined as what men do, therefore, what women did was not considered work, therefore, women were not studied.[7] Economically, women were marginal (the Other), to be called upon when needed. Similarly, political action was defined in terms of how men were involved in the political process. Traditional sociologists assumed that women "for some reason" did not get politically involved. The presence of women was acknowledged, but usually in terms of their lack of involvement. They remained undifferentiated – the background against which men's activities could be viewed. According to Lofland (1975), women are perceived as "simply there", essential to the set but largely irrelevant to the action. Glazer and Waehrer (1977) refer to the "invisibility" of women in the *man-made* world and in science. Similarly, Kanter (1975) explains that women's invisibility and low status results from their being part of the "unexamined infrastructure". Daniels (1975) concludes that in sociology more than in any other discipline, sexist thought predominates; that the very discipline of sociology is based on a male perspective of society and the assumption that the public sphere and what men do is more important than the domestic sphere and what women do. She explains:

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[7] Similarly, women are not paid for the work they do in the home, because by definition they do not work there.

> The inattention to women derives from understandings about social science commitments to "important" topics. Male scientists assign priorities for study and then assume that the picture of lives, events, and relationships presented are of universal importance. Therefore, they are collecting data in a neutral fashion. . . . Those experiences that make women different from men and that might provide them with unique or unusual approaches to the problems presented within this enterprise are excluded from attention. (p.346)

Exposing the male bias in traditional sociology has been an exceptionally difficult task. Eichler (1982) explains that sexist bias in sociological research falls into five broad categories: language is sexist, concepts are sexist in their origin and meaning, research is androcentric in so far as women are ignored or viewed from a male perspective research methodology and instruments are biased against women, and interpretation of research results reflects sexist attitudes. Having exposed these limitations, feminist sociologists have gone on to challenge concepts, theories and methods, and to propose alternatives which alter our knowledge and understanding. It has been established, for example, that as with the concepts of work and political activity, other concepts such as career, status, power, and alienation have been defined according to male experience. As well, the feminist perspective has demonstrated that social stratification theory is based on the unequal relationship of men and women – that it assumes women's subordination to men (Acker, 1973; Eichler, 1973). Also, there is growing recognition that women's so-called marginal position (because they are relegated to a devalued domestic sphere) is not marginal at all. Rather, the work of men in the public sphere is directly and indirectly dependent on the work of women in both public and domestic spheres. Further, there is a new realization that in order to understand women's situation in society, the *complexity* of their experience must be investigated. Juliet Mitchell (1977), for example, rejects "the idea that women's condition can be deduced derivatively from the economy or equated symbolically with society" (p. 172). She suggests, rather, that women will be better understood when their lives are examined in terms of four specific structures: production, reproduction, socialization and sexuality. Lerner (1976) explains that women's status results from their functioning in several areas: economic, political/legal, family, etc.. In addition, she discusses the importance of taking into account the psychological dimensions and the effect on women's consciousness of having their status determined by men.

It is evident that an extensive revamping of sociology must take place in order that the interests and experiences of women be properly included. Smith (1974, 1975, 1977b, 1979a) has made clear how male-controlled institutions serve to create and maintain an ideology which portrays women as Other. Examining sociology from the perspective of women, she explains that if feminists use the language, theories and methods of traditional sociology, they limit understanding of women's experience because women's place in sociology is generally subordinate or invisible. Further, Smith claims that by adopting traditional research perspectives and priorities, women are alienated from their own personal experience. She suggests, therefore, that in determining the focus of their studies, feminists begin from women's *lived experience*. In her words:

> we must begin with a knowledge of women's everyday worlds and of their experience. This means, in the first place, learning from them. Much of our work in the field now begins from the framework, concepts, and perhaps even more importantly, the organization of the subject matter that sets up description as an objective account. . . . The experience we must begin from, however, is that of those who live it rather than those who merely observe for the purpose of entering into the sociological discourse. I am suggesting that the world within the experience of actual individuals should become the place where inquiry begins. (Smith, 1977b, p.23)

In addition to providing feminists with an understanding of male dominance in ideology and of the necessity of beginning with the experience of women, Smith also provides a model of critical analysis. In her writings she places behavior in a social/political/historical context, demonstrating the importance of external factors that impinge upon and alter women's consciousness. Smith's work is, therefore, a major theoretical advance which has significant implications for the analysis of the experience of women in society.

It is apparent that traditional theory and method in the social sciences is being similarly criticized by feminists in various academic disciplines. It is also evident that the artificial division of women's experience into various academic categories impedes our understanding the total picture of women. Therefore, feminists must acknowledge and integrate the theories of feminists from disciplines other than their own.

As regards this study, specifically, I have attempted just such an approach. Lerner's (1976a) advice to researchers to distinguish between ideas held by the society

about "women's proper place" and their actual situation, and Hartman and Banner's (1974) recommendation that historians distinguish between ideology and reality, have been applied directly to this study. Shirley Ardener's (1975b) and Okely's (1975) anthropological evidence (discussed later) that women experience a separate reality, formally undefined and unrecognized by males, has reinforced my "hunch" that women's psychological reality is more than that of Other. Smith's (1977b, 1979a) advice to begin with the experience of women in their everyday worlds, and her modelling of a critical method of analysis which places behavior into a context, have influenced my choice of method.

Let us now examine contemporary psychology in order to assess some implications of the feminist approach. That the criticisms and proposed alternatives parallel those from other disciplines will become obvious as we progress.

C. The Feminist Perspective in Psychology

It is held by feminists that in psychology, (as in other social sciences), a masculinist perspective predominates. That a bias toward males existed in psychology, was initially demonstrated by Carlson and Carlson (1960) whose analysis of personality research demonstrated: an imbalance of sampling in research – "males are selected far more often than females as research subjects" (p.482), a paucity of tests for sex differnces, and the inadequacy of reporting the sex composition of research samples. In 1971 and 1972 Carlson demonstrated that personality research continued to focus on males and failed to test for sex differences. Another ten years have passed and we see changes: there has been a great increase in the number of psychological studies on women, carried out largely by feminists. While psychologists appear to have become more aware of the need to include females in their research samples, they do not necessarily understand either the importance or the limitations of sex differences, however. On the one hand we still see research which fails to report (let alone try to account for) sex differences. On the other hand we have a burgeoning new field of study on sex differences, which continues to debate the relevance of miniscual differences in females and males, which often confuses sex and gender differences, which typically ignores that average differences between females and males are lesser

than variations found within each sex, and which consequently dismisses the vast area of similarities of the sexes – similarities which seem to reflect our common humanness.

While the male bias in psychology is reflected in the minimal representation from female subjects, the problem is complicated by the fact that concepts and theories are based on data gathered on male subjects *only*. Male behavior has been considered the norm – the model for what is human. Silveira (1973) maintains that when behavior of female subjects does not fit the male norm, it is commonly written off as error. When female subjects are excluded, or the "deviant" data from female subjects is ignored, the theory based on data gathered from male subjects may be biased and oversimplified. For example, when McClelland began his studies of achievement motivation he dispensed with female subjects because they did not fit his model.[8] His theory was later demonstrated to be both biased and simplistic (Horner, 1971, 1972). Horner introduced another motive that seemed to be present in women – the "fear of success."[9] As another example, the career development of women was for a long time ignored, because, not fitting the male model, women were seen to "complicate" the research. The theory of career development was not considered limited, however, until feminists demonstrated its inadequacy as regards women's career development. In both examples, males were considered the norm, and females "deviant" from the male norm.

The psychology of women has also been distorted when concepts based on data derived from males are unsuccessfully applied to females. One example is Freud's application of the Oedipus complex, originating from his study of male development, to females. Though he encountered much difficulty making the concept "fit" females, he nevertheless concluded that the female superego was less developed than the male superego (Klein, 1971). Lerman (1980) has exposed new information regarding Freud's development of the Oedipal theory as applied to females. Examining the 24 volumes of the Standard Edition of Freud's works plus the volumes of his letters to various persons and the autobiographies of his disciples, she has ascertained that Freud originally

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[8] Alper (1974) describes that McClelland's first text, The Achievement Motive (1953), devoted only eight of its nearly 400 pages to studies of women.

[9] Horner's theory, though eventually criticized for perpetuating a trait theory of personality, remains significant as a starting point in the study of motivation in women. From this beginning has developed a more comprehensive and complex understanding of women and motivation – theory which takes into account women's values and the social forces which effect them (Sherif, 1979b).

theorized that female neurosis resulted from sexual seduction and trauma in childhood, fathers frequently being the perpetrators. Freud wrote to his intimate friend, Wilhelm Fliess, that he felt uncomfortable with this concept, however, troubled as he was with his own sister's neurosis and the probability of his father's involvement. Also, Freud was disturbed by a dream, he reported to Fliess, in which he himself experienced "overaffectionate" feelings toward one of his daughters. This he interpreted to mean he was uncomfortable with the trauma concept of female neurosis. He shifted to the Oedipal theory, thus solving his discomfort about his father and himself. Examining Freud's theories of neurosis in their final form, Lerman observes that whereas the mother is seen to be the seducer of the son, it is the daughter who is considered the potential seducer of the father. Proceding from this theory, Freud no longer continued to believe his female patients when they complained of parental seduction. Thus concludes Lerman, "The result was that psychoanalytic theory, which had started from an observational base, lost its connection to that base" (1980, p. 113).

Another example of concepts derived from male experience being unsuccessfully applied to females is Kohlberg's theory of moral development. As is frequently the case in social science research, Kohlberg tested only male subjects but generalized his results to females as well. Then, speculating on the moral development of the "average" North American, he placed females at a "less developed" level than males (Gilligan, 1977).[10] However, Freud admitted that he did not understand women and that he was dissatisfied with the conventional terms used to explain the nature of women.

> That is all I have to say to you about femininity. It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly. . . . If you want to know more about femininity, inquire from your own experiences in life, or turn to the poets, or wait until science can give you deeper and more coherent information. (Freud, cited by Mitchell, 1974, p.119).

Kohlberg, on the other hand, gave no indication that he failed to research or understand women's moral development, despite the fact that his data were based exclusively on male behavior.

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[10] Kohlberg placed the "average" male at level four on his scale of moral development (authority maintains morality) and the "average" female at level three on his scale ("good-boy" morality of maintaining good relations and the approval of others).

Erik Erikson differentiated female and male identity on the basis of the traits he associated to their genital organs, describing women as inner-directed and men as outer-directed. From this basis he defined femininity as passive and masculinity as active, and theorized that: women are passive and men are active, women's identity is based primarily on their need to "fill their inner space" (have children), and women are necessarily dependent on men because men achieve an identity based on what they do, whereas women achieve an identity based on their relationship to men. Thus, Erikson assumed a male model of humanity and perceived women as an *exception to the male norm*. Further, like the traditional anthropologists, he assumed civilization to be a masculine derivative. That Erikson failed to explore beyond lay stereotypes of female and male behavior; that his theory is based on individual interpretation which reflects cultural bias, more than on scientific investigation; and that his theory of female development is inadequate is considered by many feminists to be self-evident (Bardwick & Douvan, 1971; Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Gilligan, 1977; Millet, 1969; Rossi, 1972; Spricer, 1979; Weisstein, 1971). In the words of Weisstein,

> These views from men who are assumed to be experts reflect, in a surprisingly transparent way, the cultural consensus. They not only assert that a woman is defined by her ability to attract men, they see no alternative definitions. They think that the definition of a woman in terms of a man is the way it should be. (p.69)

Psychological theories that simply reflect cultural attitudes and values are problematic in that they do not further our understanding. They are problematic, too, because they reinforce inaccurate stereotypes and support a perception of women as subordinate. The *description* of the images and roles becomes a *prescription* for behavior. How psychologists and other "experts" described and then prescribed acceptable behavior for women, is documented by Ehrenreich and English in For Her Own Good (1978) and by Bernard in The Future of Motherhood (1974). That psychologists attribute different values to supposed masculine and feminine traits, in keeping with society's higher valuation of males is also evident. In a study of male bias in psychotherapeutic practice, Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz & Vogel (1970) demonstrated that many clinicians have a double standard of mental health. The clinicians (both female and male) not only described healthy women and men in different

terms which parallel the sex stereotypes, but also described a healthy man as similar to a healthy adult and a healthy woman as different from a healthy adult. About these results, Silveira (1973) concludes, "Again, male is equated with human and healthy, female is not" (p.102)

Frieze et al. (1978) explain that in addition to distorting psychological theory by using only male subjects or by unsuccessfully applying concepts derived from male subjects to females, traditional researchers have contaminated theory by using tests oriented to males, using tests which bias findings, or employing testing situations which are male-oriented. For example, traditional tests of masculinity and femininity have treated these traits as absolute and exclusive rather than as overlapping - as dichotomous rather than as integrated. Frieze et al. also claim that the failure to report findings which show no sex differences has also distorted psychological theory. There may exist a great body of research which demonstrates no difference between the sexes, but because these findings are "not significant", the results have not been published. Maccoby and Jacklin, known for their book, The Psychology of Sex Differences (1974), made the same point. Recognizing the importance of this criticism, the Canadian Psychological Association has recommended in a position paper, Science Free of Sexism (Stark-Adamec & Kimball, 1982), that researchers consider the relevance of lack of sex difference as well as sex difference. They state:

> If the lack of a sex difference makes an important theoretical point or correction to the literature, then the study takes on a new importance. It is particularly important to include analyses where sex differences were not found as well as where they were found, as this helps correct the bias against not reporting nonsignificant results (p. 12).

That psychologists have reflected a male bias is richly demonstrated by contemporary research on language. According to Thorne & Henley (1975) the concept of male as the norm, as universal, is evidenced in the use of the generic "he" in the English language, to mean both male and female. Studies show, however, that in most cases, females are actually being excluded. For example, in a study by Schneider and Hacker (1973), female and male students were asked to bring illustrations for a fictitious sociology text, the table of contents of which included chapters on "Urban Man", "Industrial Man", "Family", etc.. Results showed that a majority of both female and male students failed to see "man" as generic - as referring consistently to both sexes. A

second example: Graham (1975) studied pronoun citations in children's schoolbooks and found that only 32 out of 940 citations for "he," actually referred to the unspecified singular subject. She concluded, "the reason most of the pronouns in schoolbooks were male in gender was because most of the subjects being written about were men and boys" (p.58). Graham also discovered that in books read by school children there are seven times as many men as women and over twice as many boys as girls. Further, she learned despite the preponderance of the words "man" and "boy", the words "wife" and "mother" are used more than "husband" and "father." Clearly, males are seen more often as subjects of stories, and females, when included, are more likely to be seen in relation to men (as Other).

Further studies suggest that use of the generic "he" and "mankind," plus use of words such as "chairman" and "mothering" which segregate males and females and indicate their "proper places," together with sexist values which lend positive connotations to words associated with men (bachelor) and negative connotations to words associated with women (spinster), supports male dominance and female submission (Schultz, 1975). It appears reasonable to conclude, in light of this research, that, "Language helps enact and transmit every type of inequality, including that between the sexes; it is part of the 'micropolitical structure' that helps maintain the larger political-economic structure" (Thorne & Henley, 1975, p.15). As regards feminist research, another difficulty with language emerges. The task of conducting nonsexist research is complicated by the fact that the English language is sexist, and finding neutral or nonsexist words to express nonsexist ideas is difficult (Strainchamps, 1971). Smith (1979b) discusses how use of language which oppresses women interferes with our understanding of women's experience.

The feminist perspective offers much more than a critique of traditional mainstream psychology. It challenges traditional theory and methods by its presentation of data which old theories do not cover, by creating alternate theories and by demonstrating the relevance of alternate methods. Parlee (1975) sees the contribution of feminist psychologists taking three major directions: pointing out "new" phenomena, reinterpreting traditional notions and/or bodies of data, and showing the applicability of established psychological theories to a "new" realm of data.

The early feminist research seems to have centered around the presentation of "new" data. A classic example is Goldberg's (1968) finding that women are prejudiced against women, based on his study which demonstrated that women devalue women's work, even in traditional female fields. Also classic is the Broverman et al. (1970) study which demonstrated a dual standard of mental health for men and women, on the part of clinicians (referred to earlier). The discovery of "new" phenomena such as these is an implicit challenge to traditional psychology in that there were no conceptual frameworks to account for the "new" data presented.

Feminist research is revitalizing psychology by presenting a more comprehensive perspective on women's experience and behavior which necessitates a reinterpretation of existing theories and concepts. Horner's (1972) exploration of how *women* respond in an achievement motivation task instigated a re-examination and reformulation of McClelland's work. Bem's (1974, 1975) work on androgyny began an investigation of the traditional concepts of femininity and masculinity, resulting in an examination of previously unquestioned assumptions in personality theory. For example, equating female and male with feminine and masculine was questioned, and the notion that "gender" (which involves social and cultural expectations) is a more appropriate concept than "sex" for studying particular issues was developed (Unger, 1979, 1980). Another instance of feminist research forcing a reinterpretation of existing theory, is Gilligan's (1977, 1979) work, which demonstrates the inadequacy of Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Gilligan studied the process women go through in making a moral decision, and the values they entertain at each step in the process. Gilligan's model of female moral development (which is based on a phenomenological approach) differs significantly from Kohlberg's model which was based on the responses of male subjects only (and used an empirical approach).

A third category of studies by feminist psychologists consists of investigations which use established theory in such a way as to bring to light "new" realms of data previously ignored or overlooked. One example is Tennov's (1973) demonstration that women and men are more likely to be reinforced, although in different ways, for behaviors "appropriate" to the traditional roles for their sex than for "inappropriate" behaviors. Another example is Henley's (1975) work on sex differences in nonverbal

communication, which brings together conceptual frameworks and bodies of research from sociolinguistics, ethnology, nonverbal communication, and social-psychology. Henley's research has demonstrated the importance of nonverbal cues in the maintenance of the social structure and of power relationships, and their importance in restricting women to "their proper place".

D. The Feminist Perspective and Methodology

Feminists are questioning the prevailing assumption that social science is neutral and objective. Further, some feminists perceive a link between different ways of knowing (i.e., methods of gaining insight) and the male and female stereotypes and their differing valuations. Carlson (1972) associated the prestige associated with "hard data" to the prestige generally conferred upon men in society. Bernard (1973a) attributes the focus on empirical research, with its inherent attention to mastery and control, separation, manipulation, and power relationships[11], to the masculine principle and a male preoccupation, calling it the "machismo element in research" (p.23). Similarly, Millman & Kanter (1975) attribute the objective, controlled approach to establish "neutral facts", to a *masculine* ideal. They state,

> The more conventional quantitative approaches, which deal with variables rather than persons. . . may be associated with an unpleasantly exaggerated masculine style of control and manipulation (p.xvi).

In other words, the empirical method, with its claim to objectivity, its focus on variables rather than persons, and its preference for quantitative information - "hard data", (as opposed to qualitative, in-depth analysis which investigates personal meaning and feelings - "soft data"), parallels a masculine stereotype: rational, intellectual, unemotional, distant, and powerful. Further, the valuing of empirical methods and hard data as superior to the softer types, parallels society's valuing of the masculine. Just as the spheres of public and domestic, and the traits of masculine and feminine have been associated with male and female and valued accordingly, so the methods of research which result in quantitative (hard) or qualitative (soft) data are associated with male and female, and valued accordingly.

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[11]A power relationship is perceived in the sense that the researcher has knowledge which is purposely kept from the subjects.

The association of the dominant scientific method with the dominant male stereotype is not limited to feminists or to present day thinking. Before contemporary feminists equated a neutral, objective science with masculine behavior and values, Simmel (cited by Coser, 1977) associated the ideas of standard values, neutral knowledge, and objective science with the dominant male. He explains:

> We measure the achievements and commitments. . . of males and females in terms of specific norms and values; but these norms are not neutral, standing above the contrasts of the sexes; they have themselves a male character. . . . The standards of art and demands of patriotism, the general mores and the specific social ideas, the equity of practical judgments and the objectivity of theoretical knowledge, . . . – all these categories are formally generically human, but are in fact masculine in terms of their actual historical formation. If we call ideas that claim absolute validity objectivity binding, then it is a fact that in the historical life of our species there operates the equation: objectivity = male. (p.872)

Vaughter (1976) insists that it is imperative that feminists analyze methodology as well as models of science, because the feminist perspective requires that the research enterprise itself be put into a social and political context. Development of the inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches in feminist research may engender recognition of the limited nature of the empirical approach for the proper study of women, and of humankind.

The empiricist notion that objective observers can remain detached from the subject matter being researched is challenged by feminists. Lofland (1975) claims that observers not only selectively perceive but also impose upon interpretations, their attitudes, beliefs and values. She believes that male observers not only selectively perceive but also impose upon interpretations, their attitudes, beliefs and values. Further, male observers who are unable to empathize with their female subjects are likely to interpret and judge women's behavior from their own perspective. A similar phenomenon may occur with male therapists and their female clients. As a therapist, the author has heard numerous stories from female clients about how their former male therapists failed to understand their concerns and gave them advice which served to benefit males. For example, one client described how a male psychiatrist advised her to have surgery for breast enlargement because her husband complained that her breasts were too small. Leidig (1980) related instances of male therapists getting an erection as

they listen to accounts of the experiences of retrospective incest victims. She concludes that in cases of retrospective incest, males should not be permitted to counsel females. Recognizing the danger to women of their being counselled by male therapists who do not understand their point-of-view, the Canadian Psychological Association approved and adopted guidelines, Guidelines for Therapy and Counselling with Women, prepared by Pettifor, Larsen & Cammaert (1980).

Placing the male researcher/female subject within the context of patriarchal society makes clear another aspect of the problem - the problem of female subjects withholding information from male researchers. Miller (1976) attributes the failure of male researchers to elicit complete responses from female subjects to the power relationship which exists between the sexes. She maintains that women who are in a subordinate position to men are unlikely to reveal themselves to men because men are considered their superiors. She states, "Put simply, subordinates won't tell" (p.10). Some anthropological studies give support to this analysis. Shirley Ardener (1975b) discovered in her study of the Bakweri of Cameroon, that in the presence of men, women agree with men's interpretations of their behavior, but that in a group of women only, they tell a very different story. For example, Bakweri men interpret the spirit rites (participated in by both women and men) as curing a girl from an attack by a spirit. When asked about this in front of men, women nod their heads in agreement. However, when the subject is raised in the absence of men, Bakweri women excitedly explain that the rites are a means to initiating a girl into the language and beliefs of the spirits, and symbolize her acceptance by the women as one of them. Okely (1975) observed a similar phenomenon among Gypsy women. Within the Gypsy culture, women are seen as subordinate to men, as polluting and as under the strict control of the Gypsy band. It is the Gypsy women who, in order to protect the Gypsy men, must make contact with Gorgios (non-Gypsies), who are also seen as polluting. However, when the Gypsy women are away from the laws of the Gypsy culture they consider themselves free to be sexually aggressive with Gorgio men and to enjoy themselves while they exploit these men financially. Gypsy men recognize only the financial exploitation of the Gypsy women's behavior. Gypsy women acknowledge only this aspect when in the presence of Gypsy men. With women, however, they joke and laugh about their sexual

adventures. Ardener (1975a) maintains that this alternate view of reality can be observed in almost all nonverbalized activities and behavior, as well as in verbalizations and rituals. In light of this psychological and anthropological evidence, therefore, Lofland's (1975) following conclusion seems reasonable.

> To the degree that males and females. . . define each other *as other* and to the degree that the definition results in physical and psychological segregation, male researchers will be limited in their *access*[12] to women's places and women's minds (and vice versa). (p.159)

According to Weisstein (1971) the failure of male psychologists to understand female dynamics is compounded by their search for inner traits which agree with the stereotypes, and their failure to examine social context. Reviewing Erikson's theory and the Rosenthal and Milgram studies, amongst others, she concludes,

> It is obvious that a study of human behavior requires first and foremost, a study of the social contexts within which people move, the expectations as to how they will behave, and the authority which tells them who they are and what they are supposed to do. (p.77)

Feminist research in psychology which has attempted to examine the context of women's experience has necessarily been interdisciplinary. Bloch (1978) gained new insights from the integration of psychology with history. She demonstrated that historically (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries), women's psychology has alternately been described as quantitatively different (less rational, less or more moral) from men, or as qualitatively different (nurturing, emotional and passive) from men (who were believed to be aggressive, intellectual and active), but at all times as inferior to men, reflecting the social and religious attitudes of the times. As another example, Laidlaw (1978) integrated psychology, drama and history, demonstrating that contrary to the popular notion that psychology involved an objective and scientific understanding of women, it merely reflected the prevailing attitudes of society toward women at a given time. Foreman (1977) merged the boundaries of sociology and psychology in her book, Femininity as Alienation, by critiquing both the works of Freud and Marx as regards women. A monumental work is Ruether's (1975) New Woman/New Earth, which outlines the

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[12] Lofland's emphasis

historical development of sexist ideologies and their relationship to philosophy, religion, psychology, social movements, political movements, and finally to ecology. Ruether explains how sexist ideology is prevalent in all aspects of life – in everyday reality and in the formal institutions and organizations of society. These inter-disciplinary feminist works are important not only because they provide a feminist perspective of female experience, thus countering old stereotypes, but also because they have achieved a new depth of understanding of the female perspective.

E. Relevance of the Feminist Perspective

Thus far I have attempted to document the extent to which feminist research is influencing the social sciences in general, and psychology in particular. The feminist perspective is essential to psychology in order that issues pertaining specifically to women be investigated, and the lack of research on women generally be countered. In these ways new data will be generated which will create a new view of womankind and a broader view of humankind – a psychology of *human* behavior. A feminist perspective can help correct distortions in knowledge which derive from inappropriate consideration of the category of sex. Given the fact that our culture is patriarchal and that the social sciences are dominated by the male perspective and masculine values, the feminist perspective can offset these distortions and develop theory which takes into account women's experience from women's point of view. Bernard (1979) believes that the feminist perspective is in the process of producing a paradigm shift. The challenge is now sufficiently established that some researchers find the old paradigm inadequate. However, feminists remain an outgroup. The establishment (i.e., those with hiring power, those in charge of publications, etc.) is still by-and-large concerned with keeping them out. According to Bernard (1979), the challenge of mainstream social science by feminists is a slow and arduous task. She states, "Not everyone accepts the new paradigm. Only when the old generation dies does the new paradigm take over completely" (p.xvii).

F. Summary

The feminist perspective is not new. Throughout history certain women, aware of their subordinate position and oppression under patriarchy, and interested in living their lives differently from that prescribed for them by their culture, challenged traditional authority. They also proposed changes. The particular forms feminism took depended upon the social/political/cultural context in which individual feminists lived. However, its process remains essentially the same.

Contemporary feminism was reborn in the 1960's with the Women's Liberation Movement. Its entrance into the social sciences has resulted in a questioning of the philosophical assumptions about the nature, potential and "place" of women, inherent to a patriarchal system. A result of feminist research is that a definite bias toward males and against females has been exposed. This bias has taken many forms, from exclusion of females as subjects, to focusing on problems relevant primarily to males, asking questions and interpreting findings from a predominantly male perspective, making intellectual judgments according to masculine values, and unsuccessfully applying to females, insights derived from male experience. In other words, in traditional social science, women have been treated as Other.

Feminist research not only challenges traditional theories and concepts, but proposes alternatives. It also challenges traditional methodology, and demonstrates the relevance of alternative methods for the study of women (and men). It is evident that an *inter-disciplinary* feminist approach to the study of women is advantageous because the inter-disciplinary perspective enables researchers to grasp the complexity of women's situation. Further, it demonstrates the need to understand women's behavior in context and to explore the meaning to women of their experience. The goal of feminist research is to explore, from women's point of view, the experience of women, and correct errors of omission and distortion present in theory and research. It is assumed that feminist research will result in a more balanced understanding of *human* experience. It is further assumed that in time, the necessity for all research to be nonsexist in order to be good research, will be widely understood. Therefore, the feminist perspective is a potentially revolutionary force, and is considered by feminists to be essential to the revitalization of traditional male-dominated social science.

IV. Research Procedure

A. The Participants

Thirteen women were interviewed in this study. Women who were willing to participate were located through contacts in Edmonton and Northern and Central Alberta communities where I have worked and established credibility. The women were selected for their various differences (as regards age, education, work experience, marital status, place of residence, etc.), not as representatives of women generally. All were residents of Alberta but only seven were Alberta born. Two women were born in other Canadian provinces, two in the United States, and one in Czechoslovakia. At the time of the interview, eight women lived in a large urban city, three lived on farms (two in Northern Alberta and one in Central Alberta), one lived in a Northern Alberta village and one lived in a small Central Alberta city. They come from various ethnic backgrounds (Ukrainian, French, Metis, Hispanic, Italian, Norwegian, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, Irish, English, Scottish and Swedish) and described their religious affiliations as Roman Catholic (four), protestant (three), lapsed protestant (three), lapsed Roman Catholic (one), Christian (one) and unaffiliated (one). Ages of the women ranged from 23 to 69, and the median age was 36. The number of women in their 30s (six) was not planned, but due to unforseen circumstances: three older women originally scheduled for interviewing could not participate due to health and family problems, and younger women took their places. Levels of formal education ranged from grade eight to a graduate university degree. All of the women had worked at paid jobs at various times in their lives. At the time of the interview four women worked primarily as full-time homemakers. Two of these women were retired (from teaching and from secretarial positions), the third woman did volunteer work in her community and the fourth did some freelance work and took art classes. Except for the retired teacher who had her own pensions and owned a share of the family farm, these women were largely financially dependent on their husbands (who made from $18,000 to $30,000 a year). Table 1 compares the participants according to age, education, past work experience and current work.

Table 1

Participants' Age, Education, Past Work Experience, and Current Occupation

Participant	Age	Education	Past Work Experience	Current Occupation
Joan	34	grade 10 secretarial	waitress, clerk, secretary, bookkeeper, cashier, construction, ceramic tile business	real-estate
Beret	69	grade 12, Normal	teacher-24 years	retired teacher homemaker
Sally	23	grade 8		paid homemaker
Theresa	42	grade 9	store clerk manager, school bus driver, farm manager	supervisor, social service program
Madelaine	36	grade 12, secretarial school	clerk, receptionist, telephone operator	homemaker/volunteer
Christine	37	grade 12, technical school	clerk, typist, printer, sales, demonstrator, pipeline maintenance, auto mechanic	

Mary	35	BA, BLS	teacher, librarian, book editor	homemaker free lance editor music student
Jean	34	BA, BEd, technical school	machine operator, bank teller, library clerk, teacher	program developer
Heidi	51	grade 8, agricultural school	butcher shop, restaurant, furniture factory, sewing factories, housekeeper, bookkeeper, house builder, masonry, house renter, cleaner, painter, kitchen helper	house cleaner, house rental manager
Marcela	30	BA, MA, Ph.D. candidate	instructor, researcher, translator, free lance writer, editor	writer, publisher
Denise	64	high school, secretarial school	GWG seamstress, cashier trainer, secretary	retired secretary homemaker
Alice	32	BEd	drafting, model building, teacher, travel consultant	restaurant owner/manager.

Elizabeth	41	B Sc, Nursing graduate school	tobacco picker, cashier, nurse's aid, technician, nurse	secretary

Those currently working at paid jobs, received salaries ranging from $11,500 to $25,000 a year (A month prior to the interviews one woman had been living on $6,000 per year, one on $7,000 and one on $9,000).

The formal education level of the women's parents varied and was generally lower than what the women themselves attained. Seven of the women's parents had seven to nine years of formal education, one woman's parents had grade three and no formal education, one woman's parents had grade eight and grade ten formal education, two women's parents had some high school and two women's parents had some college or post-high-school training. In seven families, mothers had more education than the fathers and in five families the mothers and fathers had equivalent education. The ages of the women when they left their parental home varied from 15 to 21. Eleven of the women married. Age of first marriage ranged from 15 to 30. Five women eventually divorced and two were widowed. Of these seven, two remarried. Eight of the women had children and six of these women had children still living at home. Of these, one had pre-school children, four had school-age children and one had a child living with her who worked. Three of the eight women with children were currently single parents and one had previously been a single parent. Past and current husbands varied also in terms of education and occupation. Table 2 describes marital status, age when left home, age when married, age when divorced or widowed, age when remarried, number and age of children and grandchildren, education and occupation of husband.

Table 2

Participant's Marital Status, Age When Left Home, Age When Married, Age When Divorced or Widowed, Age When Remarried, Number and Age of Children Grandchildren, Education and Occupation of Husband.

Participant	Marital Status	Age when left home	Age when married	Age when divorced widowed remarried or cohabiting	Number & age of children & grandchildren	Education Occupation of Husbands/Cohabitors
Joan	married	17	20		1 daughter–14 1 son–11	grade 7 construction
Beret	married	18	26		2 daughters –39,35 4 grandchildren	grade 8, retired farmer
Sally	widowed	15	15	18(w)	1 daughter–8	grade 12, laborer, carpenter, researcher
Theresa	married	17	17			grade 8, farmer, bus driver
Madelaine	married	18	21		2 daughters –13,6 1 son–11	grade 12, technical school, communication technician
Christine	divorced	18	21	30(d)	1 daughter–15 1 son–13	university, chartered accountant

Mary	remarried	18	24	30(d) 31(r)	1 son-3 1 daughter-2	PhD, professor (first) BA & graduate work civil servant (second)
Jean	single	16				
Heidi	divorced	17	23	51	2 daughters -25,20 1 son-	grade 8, brick layer
Marcela	divorced	17	21	27(d) 30(c)		MA, graduate student (first) BSc,MD, doctor (second)
Denise	remarried	18	24	31(w) 40(r)	2 sons-33,23 2 grandchildren	Armed Forces (first) grade 10 truck driver (second)
Alice	single	21				
Elizabeth	divorced	18	30	36(d) 38-40(c)		MA,LLB, professor (first) high school, partsman (second)

B. The Interview Questions

Five pilot interviews were conducted to test the original questions.[13] The final interview questions, refined as a result of the pilot, the candidacy exam, and further investigation were as follows:

1. What has it meant to you to be a woman?
2. What do you value in your life?
3. What do you regret or resent in your life?
4. What do you value in yourself?
5. What do you dislike in yourself?
6. In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?
7. In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?
8. What do you think about this saying: "It's a man's world."?
9. What do you think about the Women's Movement?
10. What are your feelings about this interview?
11. Would it have made any difference to you if you had been interviewed by a man?

Question one is taken from deBeauvoir: it is the question she asked herself before writing The Second Sex (McCall, 1979). From this question the central theme of this study emerges (as is described in Chapter I). Questions two to nine serve the purpose of enlarging and clarifying answers given to question one. They were chosen because they involve concepts that seem to be closely related to meanings of being a woman and to the experiencing of self as Object or Subject. Traditional research on the topics of values and power has been demonstrated to be inadequate as regards women. It has been suggested that the fact that these concepts have been based on men's experience alone, has limited the concept in human terms. For example, Kohlberg's theory of moral development, which categorizes values into a hierarchy, was based on male subjects only (Gilligan, 1977, 1979). When women were later tested and their answers compared to the answers given by men, Kohlberg judged the women to be less morally developed. He assumed that women's values were less developed because they tended to be more reality bound while men tended to be ideology bound. Gilligan (1977, 1979) also criticized Kohlberg's research methodology – that he tested men in

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[13]Data from the pilot interviews was not used because the interviews were not taped.

theoretical situations. She tested women in real dilemmas – in the reality of their everyday worlds. The results she obtained challenge Kohlberg's theory, method and procedure.

The problems seen in Kohlberg's study of moral development are found generally in the literature on values. In other words, values are discussed theoretically (in an idealized sense) rather than as they relate to the context of individuals' daily lives (Drew & Lipson, 1971). Yet Sherif (1979a) makes clear that there is a complex link between people's personal integrity and their behavior. She explains that people's opinions or answers to questions may change, depending on how important a particular issue is to them. The empirical research method typically does not differentiate the importance of questions to participants, however. Empirical studies on values typically ask participants to priorize a list of values chosen by the researcher. The researcher is unaware of whether the list of values used in the test coincides with the participants' values, or to what degree the priorized values are relevant to the participants. The phenomenological method, which requires open-ended questions and in-depth exploration, allows for this information to emerge. Meanings of their values to the participants can be examined.

Current feminist literature on women's values is confusing and incomplete. Generally, sociological literature tells us women suffer from being subordinate and devalued in society and psychological literature tell us that women do value themselves highly in certain ways. For example, although children and the work of caring for children is not highly valued in society, women nevertheless appear to value motherhood (Fransella & Frost, 1977). In this sense, women do not seem to hold with society's evaluation. As regards women and marriage, it has been demonstrated that married women report that they like being married. However, there is also evidence that married women are less healthy mentally than single women (Bernard, 1973a). That there may be more to these issues than is presently understood, is suggested by Oakley (1974). She demonstrated that when women were asked if they were generally satisfied or unsatisfied with their lives they initially gave a superficial answer in the positive. However, further discussion resulted in the uncovering of negative answers and explanations of dissatisfactions. She also discovered that there was a class difference in women's initial willingness to admit dissatisfaction – whereas middle-class women

easily admit dissatisfaction, working-class women initially reported satisfaction but after further questioning reported a great deal of dissatisfaction. Rossi (1972) suggests that women are less willing to express negative feelings about roles which feel "obligatory" and more willing to express ambivalence about roles which feel "optional." She was able to make this interpretation because her research method allowed for an in-depth exploration. A phenomenological examination of women's values thus appears in order.

Questions about the experience of feeling powerful and powerless have been included in this study because there is confusion about the terms in the social sciences and in feminist literature and because the concepts of powerful and powerless seem closely tied to the experience of self as Subject or Other. Sociologists, historians and anthropologists have traditionally used the term "power" in the social and political sense and take for granted that women have no power in these spheres. Some feminist sociologists (Bardwick, 1979; Janeway, 1975, 1980) and historians (Cott, 1977; Lerner, 1976) have begun to question this definition of power and to examine the dialectic between women's formal status as powerless and their informal use of power. Similarly, some feminist anthropologists have demonstrated that when women are formally denied certain forms of power, they create other forms (Ardener, E., 1975; Ardener, S., 1975b; Okely, 1975; Rosaldo, 1974; Stack, 1974; Wolf, 1974). In psychology, power has been defined as arising from external or internal sources, and as having impact on self or others (McClelland, 1975). Humanist psychologists have interpreted personal power as relating to knowledge and growth of self in therapy and in learning (Rogers, 1977). While recognizing that authority systems operate politically to destroy people's personal power, [14] they have not acknowledged that women encounter real barriers to achieving personal power in North American society. Feminist psychologists have recognized this, however, and have begun to explore power as both a personal and political force in women's lives (Lips, 1979, 1981; Lips & Colwill, 1979; Miller, 1976). The idea that women are more than powerless victims (more than Other) and can be powerful in terms of their capabilities, as well as in reaction to their oppression (be Subject), is, therefore, closely linked to this study. The phenomenological method allows for the exploration of how the participants experience being powerful

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[14]Rogers (1977) refers to the revolutionary movement of Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

and powerless, and what this means to them. The questions about "It's a man's world" and the Women's Movement allow for an exploration of woman's interpretation of these concepts and their consciousness of patriarchal and feminist ideologies. Again, it is expected that their answers to these questions will relate to their experience of themselves as Other and/or as Subject.

Questions 10 and 11 relate to the participant's experience with the interview and interviewer. Methodology has been of particular interest to me – especially in so far as research is used as a political tool for the benefit of those with knowledge (as discussed in Chapter II) and in so far as it has been demonstrated that research methods may permit or hide sexist bias (as discussed in Chapter III). Therefore, I decided to ask the participants questions that would allow me to briefly explore with them these issues.

C. The Interview Procedure

The interviews were conducted between November, 1980 and March, 1981. Willing participants were located through participants in the five pilot interviews, through women I had worked with in rural communities, and through relatives, friends and acquaintences. The women were simply asked if they would be willing to participate in a lengthy interview with a university graduate student who was also a psychologist, about what it means to them to be a woman. When it was determined that a woman was interested in participating in the study, I phoned her to briefly explain the nature of the study (what it means to women to be women) and to inform her of the time required to complete the interview (several hours, probably two sessions). Further, I informed each participant that the interviews would be taped but that their identities would be kept confidential. I made clear that we needed a quiet place to talk without interruptions, and then gave the participant a choice as to where she would like to be interviewed. A mutually convenient time and date was set for the first interview session. Seven interviews took place in the participant's home, three in the participant's or my office, two in a hotel room and one in my home. Most of the interviews required two sessions on two separate days. Length of total interview time for each participant ranged from four to nine hours. Phone calls or further interviewing was often necessary in order to gain additional information or to clarify meanings.

The interviews were conducted in an informal and relaxed way, usually over cups of tea or coffee. Again I explained the purpose of the study and my interest in having women speak for themselves. My opening remarks were as follows:

> I am interested to learn what it means and has meant to women to be a woman. Until recently, most of what was written about the psychology of women was written by men. I want to know about women's experience from their point of view. I believe that every woman has an important story to tell and that these stories could be helpful to other women.

These remarks sparked interest and trust, I believe. Some women were initially nervous about being taped but soon relaxed and became less self-conscious once the interview was underway. I believe that my skills as a therapist and teacher/trainer in the area of communication enabled me to put the participants at ease and to encourage them to reflect on their experience and its meaning to them. (For a summary of my qualifications and experience as a therapist and my knowledge and practise of communication skills, see Appendix A). The interviewer's skill in establishing trust and facilitating open communication effects the validity of the study. A further explanation of how this was accomplished, from the point of view of the participants, is included in Chapter VIII.

The interview questions were asked in the order given above. Some women began discussing their experiences chronologically, others began with the present, and others began with their most intense experience. If women did not voluntarily speak of the past, they were directed to do so. My comments followed the rules of good communication skills, and I frequently used paraphrasing (stating in my own words what had been told to me) as a means of encouraging the participant to continue. After the participant had described a particular incident or explained an experience, I typically asked: "What did that mean to you?." After three or four hours we stopped the interview and set a time for the second session. At the end of the final session the woman was asked to choose a first name she would like to be known as in the study. Finally, a questionnaire was given to obtain demographical information (see Appendix B). Notes were sent to the participants to thank them for their time and cooperation. Approximately six months after the interviews, a questionnaire (see Appendix C) was sent to the participants inquiring about their reaction to the interview.

D. The Analysis

The tapes were transcribed verbatim. These transcriptions were then edited into sentences and paragraphs and the interviewer's comments were omitted. Three copies of each interview were made at this second stage. Charts were constructed so that the participants' answers to each question could be compared. A color-coded system was created (one color for each question) so that each participant's interview could be categorized into themes (by the cut and sort method) and the knowledge of which question had elicited which response be retained. Three kinds of analysis were then attempted:

1. The Case Studies

   The content of the interviews was organized into a case study focusing on the meanings of being a woman, for each of the 13 participants. The purpose of the case studies is to demonstrate how each woman makes sense of her experiences as a woman, and provides her own structure for the meanings of her lived experience. They also demonstrate the dynamic process of women's lives.

2. The Meanings of Being a Woman

   A phenomenological-type analysis of the meanings women gave to their lived experience as women, resulted in a list of meanings for each woman. The 13 lists were then compared and categories established according to the predominant themes, as they arose from the interviews. It became obvious that some meanings resulted in positive feelings and some in negative, so these two major categories became the first level of classification. Within these two categories, sub-categories were determined on the basis of issues ranging from personal to interpersonal to social, cultural and political. Care was taken in the discussion of these results to explain that the same meanings may be derived from similar or different experiences, and that different meanings may be derived from a similar or different experience.

3. The Context of Women's Experience as Women

   The personal and material bases for experiences from which meanings of being a woman were derived was analyzed using a critical theory, feminist approach. Consideration was given to Haymond's (1982) categories of dimensions

of experience as outlined in his doctoral dissertation. Haymond outlines three major dimensions which he calls macro, molar and micro, under each of which numerous factors are categorized. According to Haymond's categories, Family Relationships and other Social Factors would be categorized together under molar dimensions. However, in this study so much material involving family relationships was obtained, that it warranted a category unto itself. Therefore, Haymond's classification system was adapted to fit the material derived from the case studies, resulting in the following four categories:

a. Individual Factors
b. Family Relationships
c. Social Factors
d. Cultural/Political Factors

In the final step, the results of the case studies and the two analyses regarding meanings and context were discussed and literature relevant to these findings was reported. The procedure of making connections to relevant research and literature at the end of the research process (rather than at the beginning, as is done using the experimental method) is in keeping with the phenomenological method of study, as explained in Chapter II. Conclusions were drawn, limitations discussed and implications for further research explored.

V. The Case Studies

As explained in Chapter I, Chapter V contains the case studies and will follow in a separate volume. The case studies will be presented in Volume II in the following order:

1. Joan
2. Beret
3. Sally
4. Theresa
5. Madelaine
6. Christine
7. Mary
8. Jean
9. Heidi
10. Marcela
11. Denise
12. Alice
13. Elizabeth

VI. Analysis of the Case Studies: The Meanings of Being a Woman

A. Introduction

The sections that follow will be a discussion of meanings shared by some of the 13 participants – themes arising from the meanings they associate with their experiences. The themes discussed were not always identified directly in answer to the question "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" For example, a woman might first state what being a woman has been like for her (a struggle, a burden, fulfilling, challenging, etc.). On the other hand, she might begin by identifying a role (mother, daughter, etc.) or an experience (having a hysterectomy, working at a particular job, being abused as a child, etc.). In the latter cases, further questioning directed the woman to focus on what the role or experience *meant* to her. The following sections outline major themes arising from the interviews in answer to the question "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" Because the themes seemed to fall 'naturally' into the broad categories of positive and negative meanings of being a woman, they will be discussed as such. This does not mean, however, that being a woman was experienced as either positive or negative by any one woman; all of the 13 participants, in fact, experienced being a woman as both positive and negative. Nor does the experience being positive or negative necessarily imply any particular way of behaving in relation to the experience. As was stated above, there is no one simple formula to explain the meanings to women of being a woman.

B. The Positive Meanings of Being a Woman

All of the women found positive meaning or in some way related positively to being a woman. For some a positive meaning was an initial and major focus; for some it was only one of a broad range of meanings (positive and negative), and for others a positive meaning was of minor importance. The women who felt positively about being a woman did so for different reasons, as will be explained. Six general categories of positive meanings of being a woman will be discussed in the following order:

14. Being Womanly, Feminine, Sexual, or Desirable
15. Finding Fulfillment in the Role of Mother or Valuing Children

16. Being Warm, Caring, Sensitive, Understanding and Helpful
17. Finding Satisfaction in Achieving Relationships
18. Finding Satisfaction in Work Outside the Home
19. Finding Meaning in the Ideals and Goals of the Women's Movement

Being Womanly, Feminine or Sexual

Eleven of the 13 participants felt positive about being women in the sense of being womanly, feminine or sexual. Marcela enjoys being a woman in the sense of being "womanly." She has always wanted to be "womanly," she explains, and believes that being comfortable with her physical self – her "womanhood" – means to her that she has a trustworthy instrument which enables her to communicate to others. Marcela does not trust women who are not comfortable being women (nor does she trust women sho are not conscious of how women are oppressed – who are not feminists). Being sexually intimate with a man is also a part of being a woman that Marcela enjoys. Her feminist consciousness does not require her to be anti-male, she explains. In fact, she has always believed that an intimate relationship with a man is a necessary ingredient for her own happiness. When Marcela was married, being sexually intimate was less important to her than being spiritually close. Upon leaving her marriage she became quite "opportunistic" about sex, using sexual encounters for physical satisfaction but guarding against emotional involvement. To this end she engaged only in oral sex and refused intercourse. Now in a monogamous relationship, she feels free to "let go" and be emotionally involved, and experiences much pleasure in intercourse.

Theresa enjoys her "femininity" and likes dressing to emphasize it. She enjoys being perceived as attractive and appreciates being flattered by a male. While valuing her female friends, she also values her interest in and attraction to men, believing that "opposites attract." It is extremely important to Theresa that she be respected, not in spite of being a woman but *as a woman*. She explains that while she wants to be respected for her capabilities and personal qualities, she also wants to be respected in her femaleness. She is concerned that women are held in disrespect by men today, not because they are incapable but because they are female. This angers her. The notion that women deserve respect as women, Theresa learned long ago from her mother. She also learned from her mother that sexual monogamy is important. She doesn't like the

idea of "hopping into bed with any guy" and similarly demands of her husband that "I have to be number one and that's it." Having a good sex life with her husband is part of having an equal relationship and good marriage, she maintains.

Like Theresa, Denise is concerned that women be respected and also that they respect themselves as women. Aware that many men do not respect women simply because they are female, Denise is thankful that her parents taught her to respect herself and prepared her to take her place in the world alongside men. Being comfortable with her body and respecting her own sexuality has always seemed "natural" to Denise. Again she emphasizes that she was well prepared at home for this aspect of life, believing her parents to be advanced thinkers in their time. She considers herself "lucky" to have not been interested in sex at puberty as some girls were, because this meant to her that she didn't *need* to have a boyfriend. At present she feels very comfortable with her body and concludes, "I'm glad I'm feminine."

Both Alice and Joan, while primarily thinking of themselves as persons rather than women, enjoy looking feminine in the sense of looking womanly or appearing sexually attractive to men. However, what being feminine means to these women differs. Having her cigarette lit or a door opened for her reaffirms for Joan that her female attractiveness is recognized and appreciated, and makes her feel desirable. Thus for Joan, femininity relates to her sexuality. She states:

> I feel pretty good about my own sexuality..... I enjoy being a woman in that aspect. I enjoy sex and I like the idea of men pursuing me, which they do.

This has not always been the case with Joan, however, as will be discussed under "Negative Meanings of Being a Woman."

Alice's idea of femininity involves appearance, roles and stereotyped social behavior. She explained that she particularly feels "the picture of a woman" when she is with a big, strong man who is "the picture of a man." Her images also involve the man being dominant and decisive, and herself being submissive and dependent. In keeping with her image of femininity, Alice plays at being weak, submissive and frivolous, consciously using her feminine charm and attraction to influence others and control their behavior. She recognizes that "playing feminine" in this sense can be a disadvantage to her in that she may not be taken seriously and may not be respected. Nevertheless, she persists in her play-acting, knowing that manipulating men with her "feminine wiles"

works, and perceiving the more direct styles of taking power as distasteful. As regards sexual relationships, Alice is thankful that due to the availability of birth control she is free as a single woman to have a satisfactory sex life. She realizes now that her childhood abhorrence of "old maids" was the idea that they must be "sexless."

Madelaine speaks of the power she experiences as a woman – a power derived from the fact that men find her attractive. Having the power to give or withhold sexual intimacy is experienced by Madelaine in her relationship with her husband. With other men, she now perceives herself less as having power and more as just being appreciated, a change in perspective she relates to changes in her own sense of self–worth.

Elizabeth enjoys herself in sexual relationships, though she is not presently involved in one. She believes that her being the victim of incest did not make her fearful of sexual encounters, probably because the incest did not involve intercourse and because her first lover was very giving. However, she quickly cuts off a sexual relationship if the man is sexually ignorant or if she feels unequal in the relationship. She will not tolerate a sense of being "used" or "victimized."

Mary similarly feels good about her own sexuality, even after having learned to repress sexual feelings and feel guilty about having them as an adolescent. Her sex life has varied tremendously. She explains that she had a "really good sex life" with her first husband before they were married. However, on their honeymoon his sexual behavior seemed to her to become "kinky" and "calculated." She felt "used" in the relationship and eventually became sexually inactive. Having an affair with a young man, however, she describes as "very lovely." In her second marriage Mary finds her sex life to be good and wholesome, though more conservative. Fear of a third unwanted pregnancy made her uninterested in sex, until her husband got a vasectomy.

Christine enjoys her sexual self but this has not always been the case. She found that in her marriage she could not express her sexuality fully. She explains: "I was sort of relating but on a surface level, not particularly intimate." Further, she was always waiting for her husband to approach her and found this very frustrating. Whereas Christine finds herself to be afraid or insecure in a sexual relationship with a man, she has discovered she is much more relaxed and comfortable with a woman. She explains:

"With women it feels so much more open and equal and there is no fear of rejection or whatever." Further, with women she finds she is able to say what she needs and feels, and this feels more positive. Having been an active lesbian for about seven years, Christine has discovered that women together have the same problems as men and women together – that a successful relationship requires having mutual needs and desires and compatible personalities. What she wants in an intimate relationship, whether that be with a woman or a man, is mutual support, sharing, respect and acceptance of the individual.

Beret and Heidi did not speak of their sexuality per se, but did describe how they enjoy being appreciated or seen as in some way desirable. Beret enjoys being a woman in that this allows her to indulge herself in a greater variety of clothing than is allowed a man. She also appreciates being a woman at a dance, because she perceives men asking her to dance as a compliment – it reaffirms for her that she is a good dancer and a desirable partner. Heidi, too, now that she has divorced her abusive husband and is free to date other men, feels good about being a woman in the sense that she now has a reason to feel attractive. She enjoys getting her hair done and getting dressed up, and when she receives compliments about how she looks it makes her "feel good." About being a woman in this sense she concludes, "I wouldn't have it any other way."

Finding Fulfillment in Nurturing Children

All of the eight participants who have children referred to their children in a positive way. For three of the women, being a mother has been a major positive aspect of being a woman. For the remaining five women, nurturing children or the children themselves are valued, but being a mother also brings conflict. For Beret and Denise, being a woman is fulfilling in that nurturing their children was a very meaningful experience for them. The role of mother, they believe, added a rich dimension to their lives that their husbands have missed. Valuing this experience, both women stated that they felt luckier than their husbands and would not wish to trade places (roles) with them. For Denise, nurturing her children seemed to come naturally to her. She values this activity, believing that children must be "properly rooted" in the home so that they can go out into the world in a meaningful way. That her children love and respect her today means to her that she has done a good job and deserves their love. However, Denise

demonstrates some confusion about the potential of women and men to be nurturing and understanding. On the one hand, she seems to imply that women, because they have children, have a special talent to be nurturing and sensitive to children, thus assuming "mothering" to be *natural*. On the other hand, she speaks of how her father was more sensitive to her needs than was her mother. The confusion, it seems, is between what Denise thinks *should* happen and what actually has happened; ideology replaces reality as a basis for generalizations. Another indication that ideology overrides reality centers around the issue of mothering necessarily excluding work outside the home. Denise deplores the current tendency of women to put their children in nurseries or day care centers and go out to work, believing that mothering is a full-time career. When stating this, she seems to forget that when she became a widow she herself went out to work and relied on others to care for her baby. Apparently, she sees ideology as the rule and her own experience as the exception to the rule.

Beret talks about being "lucky" to be a woman because in the role of mother she was allowed to spend more time with her children and had closer contact with them than did her husband. She understands that it was her individual personality in conjunction with the social role of mother, rather than her femaleness, that resulted in her finding satisfaction in nurturing her children, however. In fact, she perceives her liking and enjoyment of children as something she "got from" her father, whom she perceived as more affectionate and gentle than her mother. Like Denise, Beret sees raising her children as an accomplishment - a contribution of good citizens to society. Beret also enjoys being able to "touch the lives" of her grandchildren: watch them grow, enjoy their activities and influence them somewhat. If she didn't have her children and grandchildren in her life, she thinks she would be very lonely. It seems significant that although both Denise and Beret perceive nurturing children as a major aspect of their being women, neither relied totally on their fulfillment as mothers for their satisfaction. Both women also had full time careers which they experienced as highly satisfying. Interestingly, both women were young mothers in the 1940s during the Second World War and both women entered the work force out of necessity (Denise because she became a war widow and Beret because of a teacher shortage in her community).

Raising and caring for her children has always been important to Heidi. As she states, "My family was always first to me. I love my children and they love me." She seems to imply in the interview that it is the proper role of women to care for their children and that they are more capable of doing this than are men. Her experience was that her husband, who abused all of their children and her, was less capable than she of nurturing their children. However, she makes a connection between the love from her parents, especially from her father, and the love she was able to give her children. (She also makes a connection between the abuse and neglect her husband suffered as a child and his abusive behavior toward herself and their children.) Heidi's dedication to providing for her children extended to the point of her sacrificing her own mental health and well-being by staying with her husband, in part so that her children could receive an education and enjoy the benefits of a higher standard of living than she could have provided for them on her own.

Christine values the nurturing aspect of being a mother and also values her children as people. She perceives the warmth and caring that she can express to others (her children included) as something women are *allowed* to do. Thus she believes that it is not being female, per se, that determines women's ability to be nurturing, but rather that society *expects* women to be nurturing. Being a mother has not always been a rewarding experience for Christine, however. In the beginning it was a struggle, as is discussed under "Negative Meanings of Being a Woman." Now, as a single parent, Christine is solely responsible for creating and maintaining a stable home for her children as well as being a full-time wage earner. While she sometimes finds this difficult and exhausting, she also perceives it as a challenge, and values being a mother who is 'there' for her children in a way her parents were never 'there' for her. Further, she believes that taking care of children teaches us to be less self-centered.

Whereas Christine values the act of nurturing her children as well as valuing her children, Sally, Joan, Madelaine and Mary speak only of valuing their children. Being a mother has been or is currently a conflict for them. The negative aspects of the conflict will be examined under "Negative Meanings of Being a Woman." Sally's adolescent and young adult life has been centered around her being a mother to the extent that being a woman means first, to her, being a mother. Though being a mother has been a struggle

and conflict for Sally, still, when asked what she valued in her life she immediately replied, "that I have my daughter – she's my own and she's all I've really got." She worries about the bad experiences her daughter has had, and hopes that when her daughter is older they'll be able to talk the way Sally and her mother never could.

Although being at home with her children was a bad experience for Joan, she too values her children. She explains that she has no "maternal instinct" but is concerned for her children's health and happiness. Her concern is especially strong for her son since he was in an accident that left him handicapped, and she hopes he will grow up to lead a normal life. She does not worry about her daughter, trusting that she will be fine, although she is sometimes frustrated that her daughter's career plans are less ambitious than she would like them to be.

Although Madelaine claims not to feel the kind of love for her children that she thinks she *should*, or that society *expects*, she nevertheless values them. She wishes she could have been as comfortable at home with her first two children as she was with her third child. She believes that providing a good home for her children is a contribution to her community.

Mary's identity as a woman is tied closely with being a mother. Although she finds her responsibilities as a mother frustrating, she nevertheless values her children highly, relating her feelings to her original Hispanic culture. She has learned a lot about herself by being a mother, she maintains. She has been forced to grow up and be responsible, and is proud of and thankful for her children in spite of the difficulties they represent. Mary is especially concerned that her daughter doesn't grow up with negative feelings about her body or with doubts about her abilities – feelings that were problematic for her.

Being Warm, Caring, Sensitive, Understanding and Helpful

The three women who found fulfillment in nurturing children, also valued highly that they were understanding and caring toward others. Denise feels contented being a woman, knowing that she can understand and be helpful to people in pain – friends, neighbors and people she works with. However, there is indication of some confusion on her part as to why she as a woman is compassionate. She implies that she is *naturally* understanding because of a "female instinct," holding to the adage that if

women ruled the world there would be no war. Supporting this belief is her perception that female teachers she worked with were more understanding of students than were male teachers, and an idea that female doctors would have a "softer touch" than male doctors. However, she does not, in her instinct theory, account for her story of how a male principal taught her to be more sensitive and flexible about students' behavior, or how men were more compassionate toward her than were women when she was a widow. Again we witness in Denise's thinking how ideology takes precedence over reality.

Beret enjoys having been able to help, influence and enjoy – "touch the lives" of – the many children she taught for 24 years. She also enjoys the "fellowship" she experiences with friends who come to visit and with women she works with in community organizations, again seeing these experiences as *available* to her because she is a woman. In other words, in her community these activities are seen as *appropriate* for and even as *expected* of women. Beret, herself, enjoys people because of the kind of person she is – kind, gentle and warm, like her father.

Christine also values relationships with other people, children and adults alike. Being soft, warm and caring feels good to her. Being supportive, helping others and sharing her talents makes her feel worthwhile and that she is contributing to society. Women, she believes, are *allowed* to be "more human" than are men in our society, and because of this she enjoys other women and is very glad to be a woman herself. This is a relatively new experience for Christine, however, discovered only after she left her marriage and after she learned to care about and enjoy herself.

For Madelaine, who has had difficulty feeling nurturing toward her children, being understanding or helpful is not a major issue. Lately, however, she has begun to reach out to others and help them if she can, and is learning to value that she can do this. She spoke specifically about understanding and supporting women who are home alone with small children, and being interested also in relating to older people and teenagers with problems.

Two women who are not mothers (Elizabeth out of choice and Theresa due to physiological problems) value the warm and caring aspect of their personalities which enables them to understand and help others. Elizabeth, like Christine, relates this aspect

of her personality to being a woman, believing that social expectations and sex-role stereotypes prevent men from being human in this sense. Thus, she relates being a woman in present North American society to being freer of the dominant masculine values and attitudes which she perceives to be based on reductive thinking, to be rigid and judgemental and to be geared to achieving success and power at any cost. Being a woman today means to her that she can be warm and close to other women, be truthful, spontaneous and freer to set her own standards of morality. In the past, caring for others in her role as a nurse gave her much satisfaction. The caring she experienced at this time was more in the physical sense of caring, however, than in her own emotional experience of feeling warmth and caring. She believes that never having received emotional nurturance as a child, she did not understand it and could not give or receive it. Thus, being a genuinely warm and caring person is a relatively new experience for Elizabeth, an experience she now values for herself and for the understanding and support she can give to others.

Theresa values that she is warm, outgoing, caring and understanding. These qualities, in conjunction with being open-minded and always interested to learn, bring her satisfaction both personally and in her work. She does not attribute these qualities in herself as particular to women, however, seeing them more as having developed from the kind of person she is and the experiences she has had.

Finding Satisfaction in Achieving Relationships

All of the participants found satisfaction in relationships with others. For some women satisfaction was found in marriage or an intimate relationship, for others family of origin was important and for others friendships were valued. Some women valued all of these types of relationships for various reasons.

1. Marriage or Intimacy:

Of the six women currently living in intimate relationships, four of them spoke of valuing their intimate relationships with husbands or a lover, and one woman also valued her previous marriage. Theresa values her marriage because she feels equal to her husband - a full partner in life. It also means to her being able to work toward goals together with someone and being able to share daily experiences at the end of the day. Madelaine and Mary value their marriages, too,

although they experience conflict with their husbands and desire changes in the marriages. Madelaine values her husband because he is a companion and friend to her and a good father to their children. Mary values the special connection she feels to her husband and their joint commitment to life goals. She respects the person her husband is and admires his commitment to family life. Denise values both of her marriages, although for different reasons. Her first husband was both a friend and lover with whom she experienced a very deep closeness – a special kind of love which is rarely experienced, she believes. Her second husband is a good companion who brings her a sense of security and contentment and adds to her sense of family. Marcela, though not married, values the intimate relationship she has with the man she is living with, believing this intimacy to be ultimately necessary for her own happiness.

2. Family of Origin:

For 10 of the 13 participants, their relationship with their family of origin remains a meaningful connection, although the reasons for and intensity of these relationships differ. Sally, Theresa, Denise and Alice have on-going, mutually supportive contact with certain members of their families. Sally feels closest to a female cousin she grew up with, and to her father with whom she experiences a mutual caring and love. She continues to feel conflict about her mother, as she did in the past, although values that her mother is there when she needs her. Denise once felt especially close to her father, who she felt was always fair and who taught her to respect herself and to be honest. Now that her parents have died, she keeps in close touch with her brothers and sisters. Theresa has always felt especially close to her mother, and treasures the memory of a great-grandmother who was a model of a strong and independent women. Just knowing that her family cares about her and would support her if need be is an important element in Theresa's life. Family to Alice means those people who are "always loving" and "always there." She feels especially close to her mother since her father's death, explaining how her relationship to her mother has changed – that whereas her mother once supported her, she is now looking after her mother. Ten years ago Alice would have considered this role-reversal a burden; now it's a positive

experience. Beret and Heidi value the influence their families had on them in the past, but have experienced the loss of both parents. They have only limited contact with their brothers and sisters, and have replaced family with friends. Mary values her family ties and regrets that she lives so far away from her family that she can seldom see them. She, too, has replaced family with friends. Madelaine has fewer contacts with her family than she used to, and regrets the loss of contact that she feels. Family to her means largely memories of times past, although she has come to know and understand her mother more since her father's death. For Jean, her family is a connection to the past, rather than an on-going aspect of her present life. The family members she felt closest to, her father and brother, have both died. She desires a relationship with her mother but still finds being with her mother uncomfortable. Marcela states that she values her family not for who they are as individuals but because she is committed to the notion of family. For the time being, at least, she feels it is best that there is distance between herself and her family.

The above is merely a brief discussion of the women's relationship to their family of origin, generally, or to the *idea* of family. Relationships with specific family members and their significance to the women will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

3. Friends:

Twelve of the 13 participants valued their friendships highly. Denise, the only woman who did not particularly value her friends, explained that having a large and close family with whom she is still in touch (some sisters daily) probably results in her not developing close friendships. Also a factor was that Denise was very busy during her young adulthood being a single parent and working mother, and chose not to speak of her situation to people outside of her family.

According to the 12 women who valued their friends highly, friends can take the place of family members that live far away, are no longer living or were never particularly supportive. Friends may, in addition, meet needs that family members do not. Friends are perceived as a family substitute by Beret, Heidi and Mary, who by virtue of various circumstance are no longer in close touch with

their families. Beret values the fellowship and mutual concern for each other's welfare that she experiences with women in her community. She is closer to these people than to her family, she explained. Heidi values the friends and neighbors who cared for her children when she was ill and who gave her advice and support, when as a young immigrant woman she had no mother nearby to turn to for assistance. Today she values her friends as people with whom she can finally enjoy herself. Mary values having achieved long-lasting friendships (both male and female). Friends today are people with whom she can talk openly and feel close, the connection being understanding and acceptance rather than blood. Like Mary, Theresa values the friendships she has with both women and men, friendships which she experiences somewhat differently. From men she expects to often get a different point of view, and she is aware, too, that opposites attract. Alice values her friends - people with whom she can "spill her guts" and "share her laughs." Madelaine values her friends as a source of support - people with whom she can talk easily and can help and be helped by. Jean values the friends she has made at her job, with whom she experiences acceptance and support. However, she feels restricted making friends because of her own fears of rejection. Further, she does not consider herself a good friend because she lacks the time and energy required to maintain close friendships.

An important aspect of friendship for seven of the 12 women who value friendships is the special closeness they experience with women. Mary explains that she first learned to value women as friends in a book club inspired by the Women's Movement. In her college days women were all on the "meat-market," competing for the right man. Marcela, like Mary, values having learned to make friends with women. Her early experience had taught her that, much as she wanted to, she could not safely trust women - they were competitive amongst themselves and would always choose to be with a man first. The Women's Movement changed this, she believes. Elizabeth also values having learned to be close to women, whose reality she can better understand as a result of her involvement in the Women's Movement. Whereas she used to think that she valued people in general, she now understands that she values people with whom she can experience a

meaningful interchange – people who mostly happen to be women. Joan values that she finally has women friends at work who, like herself, experienced dissatisfaction being at home with their children. Prior to this she felt uninterested in the women she knew who stayed home with their children and who seemed to be "just waiting." Christine once felt alienated from the women who were her neighbors in the suburbs, whom she perceived as living their lives vicariously through their husbands. She cherishes her current friendships with women who are actively involved in work outside the home, and with whom she experiences mutual understanding and support. She also finds support from the women she works with in the Women's Movement. At the moment, she is aware of missing friendships with other single parents. Sally appreciates that she has women friends who, like her, are single parents and who can be understanding and supportive. Together they share their pain and frustration and for awhile can laugh and have fun too. Theresa speaks about one female friend in particular with whom she feels especially close – closer than sisters. With this friend, she can share both troubles and joys, experience a common outlook on life and feel she is accepted entirely for herself.

Finding Satisfaction in Work Outside the Home

1. Achieving a Sense of Independence, Security, Control, Freedom or Power:

Eleven of the 13 participants found satisfaction in paid work done outside the home. Of these 11, six women claimed that their jobs gave them a sense of independence or control over their lives. That they valued this highly was evidenced in their responses to the question, "What do you value in your life?" Joan explains that having her own money as a result of her career in real estate gives her a sense of security, of knowing she can take care of herself and her children and that "they'll never be out on the street." It also gives her a sense of *choosing* to be in her marriage, as opposed to *having* to be in it – a sense of freedom she very much enjoys. Ten years ago when Joan first took a part-time job as a cashier in a grocery store after having stayed home with her children for several years, she also experienced a sense of independence and freedom, just

from being out of the house and from having some money to spend that was hers alone.

Sally values her job as a homemaker (until recently part-time) because it means to her that she can take care of herself and her daughter on her own and thus be financially independent. She is also pleased that they are secure in their own home. Christine, also a single parent, similarly values that her real estate career enables her to maintain a stable home for herself and her children. In addition, she finds satisfaction in building a career in that she is making her own decisions and feels in charge of her own life. This, in fact, is what she values most in her life. Being financially independent and self-supporting also makes Jean feel worthwhile. Being independent has long been important to Jean, and means to her both being free of others' expectations and being able to look after herself. It is something she respects about herself. Like Jean, Marcela values her professional (and academic) success because it gives her the power to control her life circumstances, the power to be financially secure and to make choices. Having power and control in her life is in fact a major issue for Marcela. Alice experiences the success of her business as satisfying simply because she accomplished the goal she set for herself. Thinking independently and setting her own goals is a relatively new experience for Alice, representing a sense of self she gained at age 31. Prior to setting a meaningful goal for herself, she had been waiting for the right man to come along, and hence had never been really involved in her work. Heidi values not any particular job, but the fact that she is a hard worker. That she has worked hard her whole life means to her that she can now live out her life in security, and reap the benefits of her lifetime of work.

2. Feeling Capable in their Work:

Experiencing themselves as capable is another aspect of achieving satisfaction through work for seven of the 11 women who work outside the home. Joan is pleased to have proven to herself and to others that she is capable in her present career in real estate, and enjoys the status and recognition that come with being perceived as successful. Christine, realizing that she is capable of building a successful career in real estate, is especially pleased because as a child

she was given no encouragement to have a career. She had been prepared only to be "someone's wife." Theresa values that she is capable of carrying out her present work in social services in her community, especially because she lacks a formal education and a certificate which is often required of people who do such work. She also values her own abilities to perceive and understand people's problems and to be open-minded - abilities which enable her to continue learning and to do a good job with her clients. Beret too, is pleased to have the skills for the work she is now retired from - teaching children in school. She especially enjoyed teaching mathematics, which was easy for her.

Joan, Christine, Theresa and Beret were all pleased to have experienced, earlier in their lives, that they were capable of what is typically considered "man's work." Joan is pleased to have run her own business as a ceramic tile installer, believing herself to be even better at the job than most men because she took more care and was patient in her work. She also believes she could be a capable building contractor, in spite of the popular notion that women are not suited to such work, because she understands what women want in a house and because she perceives the job of planning construction and hiring subcontractors as not as difficult and mysterious as men make it out to be. Christine gained much self-esteem in discovering, after she had left her marriage, that she was capable of doing work stereotypically defined as "men's work," i.e., heavy farm work, fence mending, carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring, etc. The experience for her, in conjunction with other experiences she had on a commune, was one of being free to experience herself in any way she chose. Theresa is satisfied to have been capable of managing her farm and driving a school bus in her husband's place when he was ill. She experienced both criticism and support from members of her community, all of whom perceived her as doing a "man's job." To Theresa, she was simply doing what was required, as she had done as a child growing up on a farm. Beret, too, grew up on a farm, and was actively involved in heavy "man's work" outside with her father and brothers. She continued doing farm work with her husband when he needed a hand. In spite of some concern that others might judge her to be "unfeminine," Beret was pleased to have been capable of doing this kind

of work – glad to have been able, needed and useful.

Jean, Marcela and Elizabeth obtain satisfaction in knowing thay are capable in their work and have been intellectually capable, in the past, of academic achievement. To Jean, being capable intellectually is what she values most about herself. She is pleased that her current job utilizes all of her previous formal training (theoretical and technical) and is satisfied that she is intellectually capable of her work (although she has some reservations about her personal capabilities). Being intellectually capable means to Marcela that she no longer has to rely on her vicarious experiencing of academic and professional success through a man. She can experience this for herself. She also values that she is capable of practical, domestic tasks – that she is well–rounded and is capable of using both her head and her hands, unlike most academics. Being capable in school brought Elizabeth much sought–after approval from her teachers, and to some extent redeemed her family in the eyes of the community, she thinks. Being capable at school meant that she could eventually get away from the abuse she suffered at home and from the narrow judgements of her community. Being capable at college again earned her the approval and support of her teachers, and contributed to her own happiness and self–esteem. Being a capable nurse in extreme nursing situations built her self–esteem and provided her with an opportunity to work as an equal member of a team within the medical profession.

3. Experiencing their Work as a Challenge:

Five of the 11 women who work outside of the home stated directly that they found satisfaction in their work because they experienced it as a challenge. Sally finds working as a paid homemaker a challenge because she never knows what problems she may have to deal with. Jean finds her job in the media challenging because the content is constantly changing. Elizabeth volunteered to nurse in Vietnam, knowing she was qualified and believing it would be a challenge. Theresa finds her job in social services challenging, explaining that she enjoys the process of helping others – what she puts into her work and what she learns from it. Marcela talked about being challenged by her paid work in her union position and in her unpaid political work in organizations and ad hoc groups. The sense of

being challenged in their work appears important to these women in that their work provides an opportunity for them to achieve their potential – to use their personal strengths and skills in order to complete a task or meet a goal. Though not stating so directly, three of the remaining six women who work outside of their homes implied that they have experienced their work as challenging. Christine spoke of liking herself because she is "gutsy" – not afraid to try something new and willing to experiment and learn. Beginning a new career in real estate at age 36 is difficult for her but she enjoys it. Joan's job in real estate appears to have been especially challenging for her when she was just getting started in it and wanted to prove to herself and others she could do it. She is not challenged now, however; rather, she is aware of the attitudinal barriers which prevent her from improving her position and status by entering commercial real estate. Similarly, Alice was once challenged by the goal she set for herself to open and operate a successful business. Once her goal was achieved, she became aware of entering a new phase in her work. At the time of the interview, she was debating whether to rest awhile or to set for herself another goal and challenge by expanding her business. Thus for Joan and Alice the need for continual challenge and change in work is an important factor.

4. Finding Satisfaction in Helping Others:

Seven of the 11 women who value the work they do found satisfaction in helping, understanding or being appreciated by others. Joan values that people appreciate the work she does for them, that she feels welcome in their homes and that they often show her their appreciation with gifts. She is pleased to be able to use her knowledge about housing, mortgages, etc. to help buyers who don't have that knowledge. Beret found satisfaction in helping the students she taught for 24 years – having an impact or making a difference in their lives. She also enjoyed helping first her father and later her husband with farm work, explaining that it made her feel able and useful. Sally's work as a paid homemaker is satisfying to her in that she values that she can help others – it "feels good." Theresa's job, which involves understanding, caring for and helping others in a social service agency, gives her a sense of satisfaction also. She values that she keeps learning

from the people she helps. Christine is pleased to be able to help others (both buyers and other sellers) in her work in real estate. She also values that friends come to her for help with renovation and home maintenance problems, knowing that she has specialized knowledge in this area from previous jobs and training. Denise found her 14 years as a secretary in a school her most rewarding job in that it provided her with an opportunity to learn about the problems of youth and to help them. Elizabeth's previous career in nursing was in part satisfying to her because it legitimized her role as caring and helpful and was compatible with her religious ideal of self-sacrifice. Thus helping others is enjoyed not just because it is satisfying to give to others. Related to it is being appreciated by others, having one's knowledge and skills recognized, being useful, seeing oneself as able and learning from those that are helped.

Finding Meaning in the Ideals and Goals of the Women's Movement

Eleven of the 13 participants found personal meaning in the ideals or valued the goals of the Women's Movement. Specifically, they believed that women should have equal rights in society and/or should be equally valued and respected for the contributions they make. Nine of the 13 women spoke of the effect the Women's Movement had on them personally. As has already been discussed above, the Women's Movement taught four women (Mary, Marcela, Christine and Elizabeth) the value of women friends. For seven women (Joan, Jean, Elizabeth, Mary, Christine, Marcela and Denise), the Women's Movement provided them with an analysis that fit their experience. Joan and Jean felt they never did fit the stereotype of the ideal women, and the Women's Movement legitimized who they were - it was okay for Joan to be happy working outside her home and for Jean to be an independent, single woman. For Mary, Christine, and Marcela, the Women's Movement resulted in their awareness of the possibility of a more satisfactory life than they were experiencing in their marriages, and in fact contributed to their separations and eventual divorces. Mary learned that her resentment toward her husband was legitimate, not proof that she was crazy. Christine and Marcela learned they did not have to experience life vicariously through their husbands; they were inspired by the Women's Movement to achieve success in ways they had originally been denied. Elizabeth experiences a sense of peace reading feminist

literature, which talks about women's experience from women's point of view. She is learning to fight for herself and for other women. The Women's Movement has taught Denise to consider her own needs, and to speak out about issues that concern her.

Pressure from the Women's Movement for legal reform had a direct and major impact on Heidi's life. The Alberta Property Act which granted half of the family property to women upon dissolution of marriage, enabled her to leave her marriage without leaving herself destitute. Thus, the legal reform of matrimonial property rights, an isssue fought for by the Women's Movement, had a direct and positive effect on Heidi's life.

For Mary (who values the goals of the Women's Movement) and Madelaine (who feels conflict about the goals of the Women's Movement) the change in opportunities for women to achieve their potential is more of an ideal than a reality. Just as Mary was becoming aware that she might develop herself in a more satisfying way, she became a mother of first one and then two children. Her time and energy are now spent trying to cope with her new responsibilities as a mother. Madelaine admits she has been confused by the changes she has perceived in the role of women over her lifetime. Having once fought against the restrictions she felt as a new wife and mother, she maintains that she is now content with her life at home. However, there is evidence (in that she seems not to value herself very highly) that her satisfaction is with what she perceives to be the potential for women to be fulfilled rather than with the reality of her present situation.

All of the participants (including Alice, who does not identify with the goals of the Women's Movement, but who has relinquished her white-picket-fence fantasy and established herself in an independent life and career) have in some way taken action on behalf of themselves and/or other women. Christine, Marcela, and Elizabeth are actively involved in feminist organizations whose goals are to pressure for social change and support women's issues. Beret is actively involved in traditional women's organizations which historically have supported women's issues. Jean has worked on a project to determine the extent of sexist language in children's literature. People can tell she's a feminist, she maintains, because she takes herself seriously. Theresa and Denise have informally organized women in their community or place of work to press for change

that will benifit women. Both women are prepared to speak out on behalf of themselves or other women when they perceive an injustice. Mary will speak out in defense of women when she hears a sexist remark. She and Madelaine both try to give support to women at home with children. Joan revealed that she has frequent arguments about women's rights and women's liberation. She has made positive changes in her life to her own satisfaction, and defends the right of other women to do the same. Sally and Heidi too, having struggled in their own lives to make changes on their own behalf, defend the right of other women to make choices for themselves.

It is generally held by those working in the Women's Movement, that changes in society toward equal rights for and equal valuing of women will have a positive effect on the lives of men and children, as well as women. Three of the women, Elizabeth, Marcela and Joan, referred to this concept. Elizabeth stated that when women start valuing themselves, men will have to change. Marcela spoke about merging feminist and socialist issues and building small communities based on both ideals. Joan stated that men, too, deserved a choice in how to live their lives, and concluded that when women are happier, everyone will be happier.

C. The Negative Meanings of Being a Woman

Some negative meanings of being a woman have been experienced by all of the 13 women interviewed. Further, for all of the women, these negative meanings have had a major impact on their lives. Six general categories of negative meanings will be discussed in the following order:

1. Experiencing the Female Body as a Burden
2. Struggling Against the Effects of Physical, Sexual, and Psychological Abuse in the Family
3. Being Vulnerable to the Risk of Sexual Harassment or Assault in the Community
4. Being Frustrated and in Conflict in the Roles of Wife and Mother
5. Experiencing a Double Standard with regards to Education and Career
6. Experiencing Sexist Attitudes and Discriminatory Practices in the Community Generally

Experiencing the Female Body as a Burden

Being a woman has meant living inside a sometimes burdensome female body for eight of the 13 participants. For Jean and Joan this burden involves their experience of premenstrual tension, pain, and emotional cycling. This was a prominent concern for Jean because she was experiencing premenstrual tension and emotional vulnerability at the time of the interview. She described that she felt "crummy" and "miserable," explaining that her physical discomfort intruded into her consciousness and "filtered" her experience, as would basic discomforts such as hunger and fatigue. Further, she resents the intrusion.

Joan has experienced extremely severe cramps and vomiting during menstruation since adolescence. Her early feelings about becoming a woman were centered around the pain she had to suffer, in conjunction with the embarrassment she felt at being an "early developer." While she secretly felt proud to be growing up, being teased by her male classmates made puberty an embarrassing time of life. Fear of becoming pregnant and actually having a baby also was a concern for Joan, especially because her mother gave her little information about menstruation or sexuality. She describes her early fear of sexual activity as follows: "I'm sure I wore iron panties." Joan dislikes the emotional cycling she currently experiences as part of her menstrual cycling. She explains: "I get overly emotional and overly critical of myself ... "I get really uptight and really emotional and impatient. Like I just ache!" Knowing that the changes in her body and feeling state are premenstrual symptoms and being able to predict them has helped Joan to cope with her emotional cycling and physical discomfort.

Like Joan, Mary was also unprepared for menstruation, having received no prior information about it from her mother or anyone else. She was "upset," "ashamed," and "repelled" by the experience and it seemed to reinforce her tendency to be timid and withdrawn. Mary explained that she continued throughout adolescence to be worried and embarrassed about menstruating and that she still experiences some embarrassment about it today. These self-conscious feelings about her body concern her insofar as she hopes she won't pass on her feelings to her own daughter, who seems to her to be "such a free spirit."

Marcela can't remember when she began to menstruate and in fact recalls little of her adolescence. She explained the traumatic emotional difficulties she had with her parents at this time and concluded: "Puberty must have been horribly painful times because it's just a block." For years Marcela has experienced severe dysmenorrhea in the form of irregular periods, cramps and migraine headaches. However, unlike Joan she does not seem to accept that her symptoms are physiologically and/or hormonally based. Instead she tends to judge herself as being weak when she becomes ill. Emotional cycling also appears to be a problem to Marcela. Although she does seem to make the connection between emotional cycling and her menstrual cycle, she still judges herself as being out of control at these times.

Menstruation has been a painful experience for Christine since puberty. Like Joan and Mary, she was unprepared for the initial event. However, when she began menstruating her mother reacted matter-of-factly and Christine felt happy to be growing up. Her mother gave her no additional information, however, so she learned from books the connection between menstruation and pregnancy. In her adult life Christine experienced severe discomfort during menstruation, and recurring bladder and kidney infections during and after her pregnancies - infections that appeared with the onset of menstruation. Having suffered kidney damage and having been advised by her doctor not to have more children, Christine agreed to have a hysterectomy. The surgery was a traumatic experience due to complications, a long period of recuperation, continued infections, and the need for further surgery. Christine feels that the final surgery was beneficial, although it took several years for her to fully recover. She no longer suffers from infections and poor health and the dicomforts of dysmenorrhea. However, even though she does not menstruate, she continues to experience an emotional cycle related to monthly hormonal changes. At these times she needs more sleep and feels less ambitious than usual. Understanding what is happening physiologically helps her to cope with these changes, as is the case with Joan.

Neither Elizabeth nor Theresa mentioned emotional cycling in conjunction with menstruation as problematic. However, both women experienced physiologically-based "female problems" severe enough to affect their health and result in surgery. Elizabeth's problem began in her late twenties and involved heavy bleeding during menstruation

resulting in constant anemia due to loss of iron. It was finally determined that she had some endometriosis (fibroid changes in the uterus). The problem was treated in various ways by various doctors, with various results, as will be discussed in the following chapter. Eventually Elizabeth underwent a hysterectomy as a solution to the problem, having decided previously that she did not want children of her own. The hysterectomy did solve the problem of loss of blood and iron. However, the physiological and resulting hormonal change compounded her already severe depression. How various doctors reacted to the emotional repercussions of surgery experienced by Elizabeth will also be discussed in the following chapter. Suffice it to say here that none of their attitudes or explanations fit Elizabeth's experience.

Theresa's medical problems involved being unable to have children, a big disappointment to her and to her husband. She underwent two tubal pregnancies and finally had a hysterectomy to remove her dysfunctional fallopian tubes. As problematic for Theresa as her physiological problems, however, was the attitude and behaviour of various male doctors. It took Theresa 18 months to recover from her surgery and to adjust to the hormonal changes in her body – an adjustment that her doctors failed to understand and viewed as "only" psychological. Theresa's experience with doctors is discussed at greater length in the chapter that follows.

Whereas Theresa experienced not being able to have children as a problem, Mary experienced the consequence of pregnancy and her fear of this consequence as problematic. At the time of the interview, she had already experienced two unplanned pregnancies and her fear of becoming pregnant again was interfering with her desire for sexual intimacy. Six months later (at the time of the follow-up questionnaire) her husband had had a vasectomy as he had earlier promised, and Mary's being sexually inactive was no longer an issue between them. Christine had planned to have only two children, aware that was all she could cope with emotionally. When she became pregnant for the third time, when her last baby was only three months old, she in desperation attempted to abort herself. She could not approach her doctor because she feared that she would be judged and that he would not want to help her. Her body was a burden to her in so far as she felt that others had control over it.

Alice perceives that the responsibility for birth control falls generally to women, and that this is a burden of being female. She deplores the plight of young women experiencing unwanted pregnancies who are often neglected and suffering. The larger issue of why safe birth control methods have not advanced significantly was not spoken to, however.

Experiencing their bodies (and to varying degrees themselves) as unacceptable because they did not fit the ideal image of femininity or the standards of their peer group was a negative experience for five of the 13 participants. For three women (Beret, Jean and Mary) this experience seems to have been major. For two women (Joan and Alice) this experience seems to have had less impact. Because the women were affected more by being judged according to a social standard than by their bodies per se, this experience will be discussed in the following chapter under the section, "Individual Factors and Meaning."

Struggling Against the Effects of Physical, Sexual and Psychological Abuse in the Family

Being a woman has been primarily a struggle for four of the 13 women (Christine, Elizabeth, Sally and Heidi) because of their experiences in their families. Christine and Elizabeth, as eldest daughters in large families, were expected to assume adult responsibilities of caring for their younger siblings and maintaining their homes, received inadequate nurturing from their parents, and were sexually abused by their fathers. Christine felt powerless to change her family situation and Elizabeth felt herself to be "ruined" or stigmatized by her father's abuse. Both women were severely depressed as young adults. Experiencing their marriages as unsatisfactory and as adding to their depressions, both underwent extended psychotherapy, both were divorced, and both have now created new lives for themselves which meet their own needs. Life for them, however, has been largely a struggle. The present struggle for Christine is to build a career and to look after herself and her children. Being a single parent has its own difficulties. Further, since she was never encouraged as a child to reach her potential, she has to remind herself during difficult times that she is capable and can be successful. Other independent women, and the Women's Movement generally are a support to her in this struggle.

Elizabeth's problems were compounded by the effect of her Vietnam War experience, her marriage, and her hysterectomy. The psychiatrists she went to for help became something of a destructive force in her life. They reinforced her feelings of being a "ruined" person with their pronouncements that her incest experience was either her fault or her fantasy. The reasons for her depression were never taken seriously and she was varyingly diagnosed as schizophrenic or manic-depressive, and treated with drugs and shock-therapy. Elizabeth attempted suicide on more than one occasion, viewing her action as the only way to stop the pain she was feeling. After several years of therapy and hard work, she eventually put her life back together. The Rape Crisis Center has been a positive and supportive influence in that she learned there that she was a "victim" of incest - that "it was not my fault." Elizabeth's current struggle reflects her childhood struggle: she experiences much conflict about taking care of herself versus giving to others. In addition, she feels at odds with the dominant social attitudes of aggression, competition and material gain. She no longer feels "crazy" however, finding support from individual women friends, from feminist literature and from the Women's Movement generally. She is especially involved with work at the Rape Crisis Center, now called the Sexual Abuse Center.

Sally's life has been hard for most of her young life. As a young child, she felt abandoned by her mother who left her for several years to live with her grandmother and other relatives. Sally's feelings of abandonment and anger were never resolved and she continues to mistrust and resent her mother and to feel guilty about these feelings. Struggling and losing against a school system which refused to take seriously her sexual harassment by her teacher, Sally dropped out of school in grade eight. She got pregnant, was married and became a mother at age 15. Sally's marriage was also a struggle in that her husband was often away working and when he came home he continually abused and beat her. Sally stayed in the marriage for some time, aware that her young husband had not been ready to settle down and believing she must try to make her marriage a success. However, she resented the violence and disrespect and alternately blamed herself or her husband for getting married in the first place. Eventually Sally reasoned that she alone could not make the marriage work and she left her husband and filed for divorce. They reconciled and he changed his behavior, but

within a few months he was killed in a car accident. Sally became a widow at age 18. Sally continues to struggle today as a single parent. Having little education, she is forced to accept a low-paying, part-time job (which she nevertheless enjoys) and survives on very little money. Her struggle is made more difficult by her mother's judgments and interference in her life, her ex-boyfriend's refusal to leave her alone, and by her own inability to assert herself for fear of hurting them (a problem she shares with many women). Out of desperation, she once considered giving up her child for adoption, and twice attempted suicide. She is supported in her struggle today by several women friends, some of whom are in similar situations.

Heidi's struggle was in her marriage of 26 years with a husband who treated her as a "slave" and "workhorse," who constantly abused her, beat her and eventually threatened to kill her. Struggling to maintain her sanity and a "normal" family life, she put up with his abuse because as an immigrant she did not know about her civil rights or about the welfare system as an alternative and she had no family or friends to turn to. Further, she wanted to provide her children with the education she never had (a possibility only if she remained in the marriage), feared the difficulties she would face raising three children on her own, and also feared being judged by her children for depriving them of their father. Prior to leaving her husband, she was living in constant fear for her life and was so stressed that she could not eat or sleep. She first understood that the possibility existed for her to live independently from her husband when the Alberta Property Act came into being in 1979. This act legalized her share in the rental properties which her husband had insisted were totally his. Heidi made the final decision to divorce her husband when she learned he had been raping their youngest daughter for many years. She felt support in her struggle from the professionals to whom she turned (a lawyer and a doctor), from one particular landlady who found her a place to live, from her boss at work and from her daughter. Her ex-husband still harasses her and she finds this extremely stressful. (At the time of the first interview she was glad to have the interviewer present because her husband had thrown a brick through her front-room window on the previous night and she was frightened to be alone.) In spite of this, Heidi is hopeful about her future. She is working as a house cleaner until she can pay off her lawyer's fees, and feels supported

by the people she works for and by her friends and children. Heidi is glad that she was strong enough to survive her marriage and believes that the love and security she felt as a child helped her to withstand her husband's abuses.

Other participants, though not themselves victims of abuse by their fathers and husbands, were aware of this among other women. Denise has a sister who was beaten by her husband and whom she feels was trapped into staying in the marriage because she had too many children to support on her own. She deplores this kind of abuse that women suffer. They must not be blamed for leaving their marriages, she maintains, because they "never vowed at the alter to live with abuse" and because they "deserve to be treated with respect." Madelaine, Theresa and Beret are also aware of women who were beaten by their husbands: Madelaine knew this to be true of her grandmother, Theresa of her great-grandmother and Beret of a neighbor. Thus of the 13 women interviewed, two women were sexually abused by their fathers, two were beaten by their husbands (and one of these husbands also sexually abused a daughter), and four women knew of other women who had been abused by their husbands.

Being Vulnerable to the Risk of Sexual Harassment or Assault in the Community

Another negative aspect of being a woman is the risk of sexual harassment or assault by men outside the family: being perceived and treated as legitimate targets for men's sexual advances when in fact they are unwanted and inappropriate and result in the woman feeling threatened or violated. Seven of the 13 participants spoke of incidents of sexual harassment or assault that they have personally experienced. Sally was the victim of sexual harassment by one of her teachers when she was a student in junior high school. She complained to the school principal about the teacher's behavior but was told to just ignore it. Unable to tolerate the harassment any longer, she left the school in anger and refused to return. The principal tried to convince her to return and finally expelled her. Mary spoke of her early experiences with men in high school and college when all the men "wanted one thing." Most of them were "mashers," she concludes – men who were "always wanting to screw me." This attitude on the part of men left her feeling "tainted." She explains how the men's behavior affected her: "They'd come up and grab my boobs and I just couldn't cope at all."

Joan has experienced a mild form of sexual harassment by her clients, who incorrectly assume she is interested in a sexual encounter. She is sometimes annoyed by her clients' assumptions but not to the extent that it interferes with her work. Theresa refers to the "risks" of being a woman – being seen as "fair game" – an aspect she dislikes and finds threatening. She described incidents in which she was sexually assaulted, once by a so-called friend and once by a deliveryman, recounting her feelings of disbelief, anger, disgust and fear. She also recounts stories told to her by women living on their own who must constantly guard against unwanted sexual advances by men. Theresa's general sense of safety has been affected by her own experiences and by her knowledge of what has happened to other women. She no longer stops on the highway for someone who appears to be in trouble, and keeps her car doors locked.

Elizabeth speaks of her growing awareness of the "physical danger of being a woman." She is increasingly concerned that she could be sexually assaulted on the street or in her home and resents having to always be cautious. Other women too, she has noticed, are more fearful of being assaulted. In addition to becoming more aware of an increased potential for sexual assault, Elizabeth has come to realize that she has been sexually assaulted in the past in ways that seem to her to be condoned by professionals. Her sexual involvement with a male psychologist in a group encounter seems to her to parallel her incest experience – she was vulnerable and perceived him as powerful but irresponsible – as her father had been. At the time, she expected nothing more from men in authority – various male psychiatrists had already convinced her that men were guilt free and she was to blame. Elizabeth once held a similar attitude toward the doctors in Vietnam who sexually harassed the nurses. At the time, she considered the doctors' behavior as "par for the course"; now she wonders how much of the depression and anxiety she experienced there could be attributed to sexual harassment and the repercussions for refusing to "play along." As Elizabeth begins to speak out at work about her concern that women are being sexually assaulted and harassed, she is finding that both men and women often blame women, i.e., "blame the victim."

Like Elizabeth, Marcela is aware of women's particular vulnerability because they are perceived as sex objects. She is especially concerned about sexual harassment at work places, which she sees as attempts by men to "terrorize" women and "keep them

in their place." The consequences are devastating both psychologically and financially, she maintains. Ironically, Marcela herself became a victim of sexual harassment at her place of work (it was learned from the follow-up interview) in which she was working for the rights of union women to be free of sexual harassment in their workplace. She sought legal advice in an attempt to defend her work and, although she eventually lost her job, she won a financial settlement. Christine was the victim of sexual assault by a male psychiatrist from whom she was seeking professional help. She was upset about what happened and angry that he would take advantage of a patient who was emotionally vulnerable. She wishes now that she had reported him but understands that at the time she saw it as one more hassle to cope with.

Being Frustrated and in Conflict in the Roles of Wife and Mother

Of the six women currently married, three had experienced and/or were presently experiencing their roles as wives and mothers as frustrating or unfair. More specifically, they were resentful or in conflict with the expectation that as wives or mothers they are *naturally* responsible for certain jobs in the home or that their activities outside of the home *should be* restricted for the good of their husbands and/or children. For Joan, this is a major issue. She experiences what she terms a "double standard" in her marriage insofar as she experiences that her husband has more freedom in the community than she does and has society's sanction to put himself first. She, on the other hand, feels restricted in the community and obligated to think of her family first. When she has made attempts to act for herself, she has felt guilty, has had to act without the support of her husband and has had to withstand ridicule and criticism from her husband and his friends. She believes that her husband expects to have more freedom because he is a man, and also that she learned as a child to expect to have less freedom because she was a woman. Joan also experiences a double standard in that her husband assumes he is "the boss" and is in charge of making decisions for the entire family. Further, she experiences that he feels threatened by the amount of money she makes and that he fears her financial independence. Joan resents this competitive aspect of their relationship, desiring instead an equal partnership based on cooperation and support.

In the early years of her marriage Joan was frustrated and in conflict with her role as mother. She felt a victim of the attitude that women *should* stay home with their children because their husband and society *expect* it and children are *supposed to be* better off with their natural mothers. She agreed to stay home, therefore, because it seemed the *right* thing to do, and all of her friends were doing it too. Thus Joan's full time career as homemaker was defined for her on the basis of sex, and on the assumption that women are *naturally* interested in and good at nurturing their children on a full-time basis. The result of Joan attempting to fit this role was that she eventually became severely depressed. Fortunately she sought help from a sympathetic doctor who understood what was wrong and advised her to get out of the house and go to work. In spite of this, she still wonders about her performance in the role of mother, jokes about her lack of a "maternal instinct" and worries that she maybe isn't doing something for her children that she's *supposed to do*.

Madelaine, like Joan, has also been frustrated in her marriage in the roles of wife and mother. In her early married life, she felt "caged" by a possessive husband, resented being tied at home with children and was frustrated in her attempts to feel "free" and "independent." She survived this stage of her marriage by fighting her husband's expectations. Today she is accomodating to her husband's desire that she focus her energy on her children and himself. She has decided to put her own needs last, hoping this will help him become more secure – that he will be less threatened and therefore less tense and critical – and that as a result the family atmosphere will be more positive for everyone. Although Madelaine maintains she is satisfied with this solution and is content with her situation, there is evidence that she doesn't value herself highly and that she finds little in her life that is meaningful. She became conscious of this during the interview, as we can see by her following remarks: "...when I really try to think what is meaningful to me, a lot, there's not all that much for me," and "I have this feeling that I'm not able to do it" (achieve something for myself), and "I guess I don't have a very big price tag on myself."

At present, Madelaine experiences the changes in role expectations of women as confusing. As a child, she witnessed women being treated as "servants" or "slaves" – where "the man thought he had complete control over her." Friendships between women

and men did not exist. She has since learned to be friends with men and she values this. Her husband is one of her friends. She is less certain about her role as a mother, however, and she experienced being a mother to her first child as more of a burden than a joy. She admits that even today, although she cares for her children, she doesn't feel the love for them that she thinks she's *supposed to* feel. This is understandable, knowing that Madelaine was a middle child in a large family of 13 children, who never witnessed or experienced much warmth or affection. It is a difficult feeling for her to resolve, however, in a society which sanctifies maternal love, believing women to be *naturally* loving and nurturing toward their children. While Madelaine concludes that she can only do her best—that she can't force herself to feel what society says she *should* feel – she sometimes dreams of how different it might be.

The frustration Mary experiences in her marriage centers around the assumption that it is she who is ultimately responsible for child care, household maintenance and the mental health of the whole family – she being a woman and this work somehow *belonging* to women. It is not that she resents having to sacrifice her career as an editor per se; she is pleased, in fact, to drop it for awhile and explore her first love, which is art. Rather, she resents the assumption of her husband, supported by society, that she alone, by virtue of being a wife and mother, must be the person to sacrifice her career "for the good of the family." She also resents that she alone must handle the consequences of being emotionally exhausted, responsible for two young children 24 hours a day, of being physically tied to the house, of being isolated from other adults in her work and of being financially dependent. Her conflict centers around wanting to do the best thing for her children and still needing to develop her own potential in some way. She perceives that her options are limited by lack of funds for help in her home, lack of quality child care facilities in her community, lack of assistance from a husband involved in his own career and lack of assistance from family who live in another country. Therefore, the alternatives for Mary are limited insofar as she is left with major responsibility for child care and household maintenance, and little free time to develop her own interests. Mary chooses to go along with the current breakdown of responsibilities in her home, fearing the possibility of a second marriage breakdown and bolstered by the knowledge that, above all else, she values her children and husband.

She no longer blames herself personally for not being able to cope with her responsibilities at home and in addition handle an outside career. Rather, she sees her situation as the fate of women; she feels "caught by biology" - trapped in the roles of mother and wife, and unable to be a person or even a woman first. That she was resentful and depressed was obvious, both to herself and to the interviewer.

Of the seven women married previously, six experienced these marriages negatively and found themselves frustrated, resentful, or trapped in the roles of wife and mother. That Sally and Heidi were physically and mentally abused by their husbands has already been discussed. As was explained above, both women adapted themselves to the abuse for specific reasons - Sally for a relatively short time and Heidi for a much longer time. Sally and Heidi also experienced conflict in relation to their children. Sally's husband repeatedly beat her and called her names in front of their daughter, undermining Sally's authority and her daughter's respect for her. This made Sally's relationship with her daughter very difficult, both while her husband lived and after he was killed. She at one point felt so powerless in the role of mother that she seriously considered giving up her daughter for adoption. The conflict Heidi experienced as a mother was not with her children but involved them, in that she worried about whether to leave her husband and deprive her children of their father or to stay in an abusive marriage so that her children could be with their father and receive the benefit of an education. For many years the ideology which supported the family staying together took precedence over the reality of Heidi's life.

Christine, Marcela, Elizabeth and Mary also experienced frustration and conflict in their earlier marriages. For these women, however, this is only one of a number of negative aspects to being a woman, the effects of which are mostly resolved. The major issue for these women, one which eventually led to marriage breakdown, was that as wives they were expected to gain an identity through their husbands. How this expectation was manifest in their marriages was described clearly by each woman. For Christine, it involved working at part-time jobs to put her husband through school and making a full-time career of being a "perfect housewife and mother" - work which supported his development, not her own. She tried being "Superwoman" she explained, but didn't find it satisfying, and couldn't relate to her isolated life in the suburbs or the

women who, like herself, were expected to be "extensions of their husbands." Eventually she left her marriage. Motherhood also proved to be a problem for Christine in the early years. She was still suffering from her own abuse as a child, was still her mother's protector, maintained the household while working at a paid job part-time to put her husband through school and was constantly ill. Being a mother was just one more burden, certainly not the satisfying career it was *supposed to be*.

Marcela explains that she married her husband to avoid being alone and as a means to finding "meaning" in her life, her ultimate goal. Further, she reasoned that marrying an intellectual man would provide an opportunity to experience an intellectual life. However, when she discovered that she, herself, could be a successful academic (she obtained scholarships to do research at Harvard and in Europe and was invited to present papers at various conferences), and that her intellectual husband lacked emotional honesty, the dream world fell apart. Marcela left her husband and became seriously involved in writing and doctoral studies. She was later divorced.

Elizabeth believes that she married because she was 30 years old and felt a pressure to get married. She realizes now that although she respected this man she did not love him. She realizes too that he provided her with an escape from the world of nursing and from a master's thesis she didn't want to finish – marriage was a chance for a new beginning. However, having not yet recovered from her Vietnam War experience, she was not ready to meet the emotional demands of marriage. Further, she could not relate to her husband's anxieties about being a successful academic, which to her seemed trivial. In conjunction with this, she could not obtain satisfactory psychiatric help for her depression, which had become more severe after her hysterectomy. The marriage disintegrated. Elizabeth was finally admitted to a mental hospital at her own insistence, and later obtained a divorce.

Like Marcela, Mary thought that her marriage to her first husband would bring her an intellectually stimulating life in academia. And like Elizabeth, she is aware that she used marriage as a way to avoid an unsatisfactory career – a career in teaching. She describes how the marriage became immediately less than ideal when she discovered on her honeymoon that her husband had what seemed to her to be a calculated and kinky attitude towards sex. Mary felt used. Another problem for Mary was what she

experienced as her husband's expectation that she be dependent on him – that she be his "Baby." She perceived that when she began to develop her own ideas and a sense of independence, he felt threatened and became even more controlling. He insisted she was crazy because she didn't want sex with him, and sent her to a psychiatrist. Mary did enter therapy but she also became involved with another man, left her husband and later divorced him.

Experiencing Sexist Attitudes and Discriminatory Practises in Relation to Education and Career

Being limited or disadvantaged by sexist attitudes or discriminatory practices in relation to careers and education was experienced by 10 of the 13 participants. For Joan this is a major source of frustration. She perceives what she again terms a "double standard" in the business world – a discrimination which women encounter when they try to advance in their career or enter a career stereotypically considered male. She first experienced this when she began a ceramic tile installation business and discovered that people thought she was incapable of doing the job or that it was an inappropriate career for a woman. In her current career in real estate she is aware that whereas clients feel fine about buying their homes from women, in commercial real estate they still prefer to "do business" with men. Clients believe, she thinks, that men know more about big buildings or are more capable of handling large sums of money, simply by virtue of being men. This attitude frustrates her and inhibits her from moving into commercial real estate. Joan believes that she would also be discriminated against (on the basis of sex) if she were to pursue a career as a building contractor. She expects that she would have trouble borrowing money from a bank to get started, because it would be assumed that she is incapable of handling the job. She, on the other hand, thinks that she would be an especially good builder of homes because she understands what women want in homes. However, she believes that men feel protective of this domain, and that they want women to think that jobs that men have traditionally worked at in our culture are too hard for women. She further believes that by keeping the knowledge to themselves, men also keep the benefits to themselves – benefits such as money, status and power.

As regards her education, Joan described how she was channeled into business college for secretarial training after grade ten because a government bursary was made

available to her for such training. She did not appear to be aware, or at least made no comment on the issue at the time of the interview, that financial assistance for this particular training was discriminatory, because only young *women* received assistance for secretarial school. Joan spoke only about the fact that her family did not have enough money to send her to university, implying that she was lucky to be assisted with any kind of training that would help her gain her independence. Madelaine was assisted with similar training as a young woman and, like Joan, seemed unaware of the discrimination underlying the policy for financial assistance. She, too, was glad for the chance to gain her independence in whatever way was open to her. It seems likely that both women were, in fact, lucky to have financial assistance which enabled them to gain skills for a job. The problem is with the kind of training that was made available to them. That neither women found secretarial work particularly satisfying is evidenced by the fact that neither stayed with it for long nor do they desire to pursue it again. Their interests are in very different areas.

The fact that neither Joan nor Madelaine was encouraged by her family to gain an education and/or develop her potential, and/or be strong and independent, reflects an assumption that girls do not need to find a place for themselves in the career world. Christine talks about this being the assumption in her family and community. In her words:

> I don't think I was very well prepared in my childhood for what I was to meet later on in my life. Basically, I was just prepared to grow up and be somebody's wife. I wasn't given any encouragement to get a good education and I didn't have things in my life to stimulate any thoughts about what I could do with my life. I just assumed that what I would do is grow up and be married. So that's what I did.

When Sally was permitted to drop out of school in grade eight, this was also one of the assumptions operating in her family and community. She does not speak of the assumption, only wonders what her life would have been like if she had stayed in school.

For Mary, Marcela, Alice and Elizabeth, the issue was not one of getting an education but of getting an education which suited their personalities and developed their talents. Whereas Beret chose a traditionally female career (teaching) the choice was not problematic because it suited her personality and met her needs. Beret, in fact, taught school for 24 years and experienced much distress upon her retirement. However, original career choices (all stereotypically appropriate) were problematic for Elizabeth,

Mary, Marcela, Alice and Jean, because they did not fit their personalities and interests. Elizabeth, while experiencing general university courses as highly stimulating and feeling at home in nursing insofar as it allowed her to take care of others in a professional role, found other aspects of nursing to be unsatisfactory. As a nursing student she was disappointed, finding the practicum aspects of her nursing training much less stimulating than the theoretical courses she took. And as a nurse she was frustrated by the condescending attitude of male doctors and the limitation of her role as one who does not question but only follows orders. Eventually she left her profession.

Mary decided to go into teaching because her mother and grandparents approved – teaching was a "respectable" and "secure" career for a girl and was what her mother wanted her to be. Mary struggled through education courses at university despite her disinterest in them, and relegated her newly-discovered interest in art to a leisure activity. Uninvolved in her studies, university became for Mary a place to find a man. Teaching became, for one year, a means to a job that would enable her to be close to the man she loved. When she married him, she left teaching. Similarly, Alice chose teaching home economics as her career because it was an acceptable career for a woman – a "safe" and "feminine" choice. She, too, became more involved with the social aspects of university life than with her studies. She taught for several years but was not satisfied. Other jobs seemed to not be important and she experienced a marked lack of commitment to them, for she was always waiting for the right man to come along. Then she would get married and settle down and life would really begin. The sexist attitude which assumes it is unnecessary for a woman to be serious about her education or a career because she will eventually marry anyway had become a part of Alice's self-concept. It took her until age 30 to realize she could make a life and career for herself that did not depend on her relationship to a man, and to discover the commitment to a career that she had for so long lacked.

Marcela always wanted both a career and a marriage. Wanting a career that was creative and artistic, she entered a modelling and fashion school – something "*acceptable* for a girl to do." When she learned that the common goal there was to find an appropriate (i.e., rich) husband, she left and entered university. She did not expect to do well herself, but assumed she would be involved with male intellectuals and could at least

vicariously experience an intellectual life, "through osmosis" she thought. She could not herself be a Philosopher King, but she might marry one. Thus, when she married, her husband became in part a means by which to experience academic success. Women were too emotional, she thought, to achieve in academia where one was required to be strictly rational. However, she began to realize that she could achieve academically, and that her husband's extreme rationality was "false and empty." As her assumptions about male/female differences became shaky, so did her marriage. After they separated she began to take her studies seriously, to speak out in class, teach courses, publish papers, travel to other universities, win scholarships, and establish a reputation in her field. In spite of her academic success, however, Marcela remains very insecure about her abilities. She believes deep down that the assumption that the male mind is superior and that men are more intelligent and rational (a belief supported by the fact that her discipline has an all male faculty) is correct. She has also internalized the sexist idea that her emotional life is particular to females and a sign of weakness, and therefore must be kept under strict control. Consequently, she fears her emotions and works hard to control them in order, she believes, to maintain her rationality. As a result she is highly anxious.

The problems of being female were complicated for Jean by her family's economic situation. When she graduated from high school at age 16, she perceived that she could not stay home since her work on the family farm was not considered as valuable as her brothers' work and she knew that she could not be "kept" because there was not enough money. Nor could her family afford to send her to university. She saw as her options, either becoming financially dependent on a husband (her father wanted her to marry eventually but she wasn't sure she wanted to be married, and besides, no one had asked her) or to go out to work and support herself (her mother assumed she would do this – it was what she had done and Jean was, after all, capable). Jean left home and found a job in a bank – a job that was low-paying and offered no chance for advancement for women. She describes how she eventually became bored and decided to find a more interesting and promising career. She knew that teaching and nursing were acceptable careers for women but was interested in neither, so she interviewed for entrance to a program in metereological technology – an interest stimulated by her

father. However, Jean was told after the interviews that women were not suitable candidates for the program – her second encounter with institutionalized discrimination. A friend advised her that her best alternative was to go to university, so she did, still not knowing what she would eventually work at. While there, a student counsellor told Jean to pursue a career in teaching. Although she experienced the counsellor as supportive, it appears that he reinforced the stereotypic feminine behaviors of passivity and dependence, already a problem for Jean, by assuming an authoritative role and giving her advice. It took less than a year of teaching for Jean to decide this was the wrong career for her, and several more years for her to convince her counsellor and herself that she should try something else.

Experiencing Sexist Attitudes and Discriminatory Practices in the Community Generally

Sexist attitudes and discriminatory practices experienced outside of the family and apart from the realm of career and education were also perceived as negative aspects of being women. Being restricted in their activities because they are female, or being assumed to be unfeminine if they are active was described by eight of the 13 participants as a negative experience. Joan and Beret both spoke of themselves as having been "tomboys" when they were small – they preferred to play actively outdoors. The assumption underlying the label "tomboy" is that girls who are physically active and like to play outdoors are behaving like boys. Joan remembers that her mother used to push her to play with "girls' toys" and frequently told her she should have been a boy. Beret felt that her mother preferred Beret's more "feminine" sister who was accomplished at needlework and other quiet, indoor activities. Joan and Beret did not mind being tomboys; they were enjoying themselves. They have thought of themselves as "different," however, and Beret did feel rejected by her mother for this difference.

Today Joan is often annoyed and hurt by sexist attitudes on the part of friends and relatives of her husband, who put her down and make fun of her because she speaks her mind and acts independently. Although she feels attacked, Joan doesn't put up with the treatment she experiences and argues with these men about the validity of her position. Beret suffers today too, but not from criticism by others for being active or outspoken. Her suffering comes from her own judgment of herself because she

does not fit the stereotyped image of the small and dainty woman. Being a big, tall person with large hands, she experiences herself as not looking feminine. Although the sense of inadequacy that Beret experiences as a result of being big does not impinge on her life goals (i.e., it has not prevented her from pursuing a career, from becoming intimately involved with her husband, family and friends, or from being active in her community), it is manifest in her own sense of self-worth. She spoke of disliking her size and shape both in answer to the question "What do you dislike about yourself?" and "What do you value in yourself?" Also notable is that Beret had difficulty talking about what she valued in herself, being much more comfortable talking about what she admired in her parents or what she values in her life generally. Indicative, too, of her difficulty accepting herself are the tentative words she uses when actually talking about what she does value in herself. For example, she states: "And I think that maybe something that I think is alright with myself is that I don't mind working."

The attitude that most affects Jean and Alice is that they *should* get married, the implication being that they are failures as women because they are single. In both cases, it is their aunts who make these judgments, perhaps because it is on family occasions that Jean's and Alice's single status stands out, and because female relatives seem to believe it is their *place* to make judgments about their own family members - family is their business. Alice also experiences as a burden the expectation that she *should* like children, because she doesn't like them particularly. She recognizes, too, that being expected to cook and play hostess is a burden for some women (her sister-in-law, for example) though she herself enjoys this activity. Luckily for Alice, she has largely resolved her own feelings about not being married and so is only temporarily affected by the judgment she experiences. Jean, on the other hand, is extremely affected by the judgments of her aunts, believing deep down that she is a failure as a woman because she is not lovable. She is so deeply affected by this judgment that she wishes she were a man, believing that a man's life would be easier to cope with, since he has only to achieve in his career to be successful.

Denise dislikes the attitude which claims that women are less capable than men. She has noticed that while some men give lip service to women's equality, their behavior indicates that they don't really listen to, believe or respect women. She has recognized

this attitude as "male chauvinism" only in the past 10 years, however. Prior to that, she wasn't aware it existed, having assumed that men respected women the way her father did. However, she recalls her mother exclaiming to her "It's a man's world!" and she understands why this was an accurate account of her mother's experience as a woman. Tied to her work at home, caring for 10 children, Denise's mother had little opportunity to socialize. Her opinions were not respected in political discussions. Yet she was expected by the male doctors and priests, whom she was taught to respect, not only to be responsible for the welfare of her husband and family, but also to sacrifice herself for their benefit. Thus Denise understands the extent to which her mother experienced a double standard. However, she believes that young women's lives have improved considerably since her mother's time.

In spite of the changes that have occured in social attitudes toward and policies affecting women, the experience of being a woman today may for some women resemble Denise's mother's experience. For example, Sally is distressed by the behavior of men which indicates they "think they're better" or "smarter" than women, and a belief that women are "a bunch of dummies" and not worth listening to because they don't know what they're talking about. She notices that men do not listen when women speak, but pay attention to a man saying the same thing. It angers her that women are "put down" and assumed to be ignorant because they are "only a woman."

Theresa, too, is aware of sexist attitudes that affected her both as a child and as an adult. She describes an incident she experienced in school (which she recalled in vivid detail) whereby her teacher criticized the girls, more than the boys, for sliding down a banister. The girls would ruin themselves for their future husbands, he scolded, and this would be a problem for the husbands. Theresa was and still is outraged by the sexist assumptions that (a) she would be ruined by physical activity, and (b) this would be problem not for her but for a future husband. She explained as she described the incident that it still enrages her today – that as she spoke it was as if it had just happened yesterday. Further, she has resolved that if she ever has the opportunity (and she thinks she will), she will confront this teacher with what she considers to be his sexist assumptions and discriminatory behavior. As an adult, Theresa has experienced sexist attitudes from people in her community (both male and female) who criticized her

more than once for doing a "man's job" (driving a school bus, managing her farm) when her husband was ill. She has also experienced a sexist attitude on the part of men in her curling club who refused to take into account the needs and opinions of the women. She recalls that some wives of some of these men sided with their husbands against the women. Theresa has also perceived a sexist attitude in various members of the medical profession who treated her with disrespect, discounted her experience and dismissed her concerns as neurotic. These experiences will be examined more fully in the following chapter. Theresa is also aware of and angered by sexist attitudes affecting other women – women she talks to through her job. She is aware of the detrimental effect on women who work at home, caring for their children and running their households, who see themselves as "just a housewife" because the work they do is not valued in our society. She perceives, too, that women who work in low-paying jobs (secretaries, clerks, waitresses) are assumed both to be dependent on a man and to not be in need of a larger income, and consequently are kept dependent on men of whom they might wish to be free. Further, Theresa has witnessed that women who work for higher pay at jobs considered to be a "man's job" (heavy equipment operators, truck drivers) are judged as unfeminine and are assumed to be sexually interested in or involved with the men with whom they work. She has witnessed, too, that women who have been deserted and prostitute themselves in order to feed and clothe their children are judged to be morally inferior and socially irredeemable. In all cases, the woman's position is not understood. Government policy, Theresa believes, discriminates against women insofar as women who are single parents are expected to assume responsibility for their children and to work for a low wage to support them, whereas men are free to do neither. All of these incidents make Theresa angry. She copes by speaking out and fighting back when the opportunity arises, supported by her knowledge that her strong and independent mother and great-grandmother did the same.

The issue that at the moment is of most concern to Elizabeth is that the men with whom she works don't seem to care that women are being oppressed by sexist attitudes and discriminatory practices. She explains how when she presents statistical evidence to them they typically debate the validity of the statistics, and never react to the issue of the injustice represented by the statistics. She has been shocked to learn

this and vows to keep supporting women's issues.

D. Summary

A phenomenological analysis of the 13 case studies resulted in 12 broad categories of meanings of being a woman – six positive and six negative.

The Positive Meanings of Being a Woman

All of the participants experienced being a woman positively in some way, although each positive meaning may have had a greater or lesser importance to an individual woman.

Being Womanly, Feminine, Sexual, or Desirable

Eleven of the 13 participants felt positive about their "womanhood," "femininity," sexuality or being perceived as desireable or attractive.

Finding Fulfillment in Nurturing Children

Eight of the 13 participants had children and all of these women valued their children. However, only three of the women reported finding satisfaction in the job of nurturing their children. (These women worked outside of their homes in addition to caring for their children). The remaining five woman (three of whom work outside their home) have experienced or are currently experiencing the role of mother as problematic for various reasons.

Being Warm, Caring, Sensitive, Understanding and Helpful

Six of the 13 participants value that they are warm, caring, sensitive and understanding people and enjoy being helpful to others. Three of these women were mothers who also valued nurturing their children, one was a mother who did not feel particularly nurturing toward her chidlren, and two of these women had no children.

Finding Satisfaction in Achieving Relationships

Ten of the 13 participants valued their relationships to their family of origin, although family had different meanings and different degrees of importance for these women. Further, the family members to whom a meaningful connection was made differed from woman to woman. Five of the seven women married or living with a partner value that intimate relationship. Twelve of the 13 women valued

friendships highly. Eight of these 12 women found friendships with women to be of particular importance.

Finding Satisfaction in Work Outside the Home

Eleven of the 13 participants found satisfaction in paid work done outside of their homes. Six women valued that their jobs gave them a sense of independence, security control, freedom or power. Seven women found satisfaction in their work because it demonstrated to them that they were capable. Five women found satisfaction in their work because it was a challenge. Seven women enjoyed their work because they enjoyed helping and being appreciated by others.

Finding Meaning in the Ideals and Goals of the Women's Movement

Twelve of the 13 participants found meaning in or valued the goals of the Women's Movement, i.e., that women should have equal rights in society and be valued equally. Nine women described the positive effect the Women's Movement had on them personally. Three women were active in various aspects of the Movement and three women spoke of how changes in society which benefited women would also benefit men and children.

The Negative Meanings of Being a Woman

All of the 13 participants described negative meanings to being a woman related to experiences which had a major impact on their lives. Whether or not these negative meanings balanced, outweighed or took second place to the positive meanings varied from woman to woman.

Experiencing the Female Body as a Burden

Eight of the 13 participants experienced their female body as sometimes a burden. For five women, dysmenorrhea has been or continues to be problematic. Three women spoke of having been unprepared for menstruation at puberty. Three women have undergone surgery as a result of severe problems involving the female anatomy. One woman experienced not being able to have children as a problem and two women experienced the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy or the responsibility for birth control as a burden. Five women experienced their bodies as unacceptable because they did not fit the ideal image of femininity or

meet the standard of their peer group. For three of the five women this experience has had a major impact on their lives.

Struggling Against the Effects of Physical, Sexual & Psychological Abuse in the Family

Life as a woman has been primarily a struggle for four of the 13 participants because of the abuse they suffered in their families. Two of these women were sexually abused by their fathers and emotionally deprived generally in their families of origin and have spent much of their adulthood recovering from the effect of abuse and deprivation. The other two women were physically and psychologically abused by their husbands (one of these husbands also sexually abused one of his daughters) and are now struggling to create a secure and stable life for themselves. Four other women, in addition, knew of family members or neighbours who had been physically abused by their husbands.

Being Vulnerable to the Risk of Sexual Harassment or Assault in the Community

Seven of the 13 participants described incidents of sexual harassment or assault they had personally experienced and expressed feelings about it ranging from annoyance to resentment to devastation. The women were varyingly harassed or assaulted by a teacher, students, clients, a "friend," a delivery-man, a psychologist, doctors, employers, and a psychiatrist.

Being Frustrated and in Conflict in the Roles of Wife and Mother

Of the six women who are currently married, three experience or have experienced these marriages as frustrating or unfair insofar as they have been expected to take on the restrictive roles of wife and mother. Six women out of seven who were previously married but were now divorced or widowed experienced their marriages as frustrating and resented the expectations placed on them as wives. Three of these women also experienced conflict in the role of mother.

Experiencing Sexist Attitudes and Discriminatory Practises in Relation to Education and Career

Ten of the 13 participants described experiences involving sexist attitudes and/or discriminatory practices in relation to education, career choice, business

practices and institutional structures. In the majority of situtations, the women were not conscious of the sexism or discrimination operating at the time, and only now, in retrospect, understand it.

Experiencing Sexist Attitudes and Discriminatory Practices in the Community Generally

Eight of the 13 participants experienced a variety of sexist attitudes and discriminatory practices relating to the feminine stereotype and their "proper place." They perceived that they were expected to be inactive, dainty in appearance, married, working at home only, not working at "a man's job," and to be satisfied with fewer choices and less pay than men. In addition, they felt they were judged to be less capable and less intelligent than men.

VII. Analysis of the Case Studies: Women's Experience in Context

A. Introduction

Women give meanings to their experience as women through an interactive process, a dialectic between a woman and the circumstances in which she is situated. In order to more fully understand the meanings women attribute to their experiences, it is essential to examine the context of their experience – the dimensions of their realities which affect their experience as women and the meanings they give to this experience. The context of the 13 participant's lives will be discussed as follows:

1. Individual Factors
2. Family Relationships
3. Social Factors
4. Cultural/Political Factors

B. Individual Factors and Meaning

Among the 13 participants, three factors were most important in affecting their experience as women and the meaning they gave to that experience. These three factors will be discussed in the following order:

1. Health
2. Temperament
3. Physical Appearance

Health

Their state of health was a factor affecting their experience of themselves as women for nine of the 13 participants. Beret and Denise spoke of valuing their good health (both physical and mental) and valuing that they are capable of living actively and independently. Denise states the she's "very grateful to have good health" because it means she's able to "do things you want to do" and "do things for myself." Beret feels "lucky" to have good health so that she can "look after yourself and enjoy that part of your life." She finds meaning in the following adage which she quoted: "Don't grumble about growing old; it's a privilege." It is likely that for Denise and Beret, appreciation of their health relates to their age (over 60) and their awareness that other people their age

do have serious health problems. Madelaine and Jean, both women in their 30s, were affected by their awareness of their health problems and perceived physical vulnerability. Madelaine, who was at the time of the interview recovering from a serious back problem, referred to her poor health in answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?" Facing illness or death made her feel powerless, she explained. Jean's concern stems from knowing that she has possibly inherited a tendency toward being overweight and developing arteriosclerosis, a condition which has led to an early death for a number of her relatives. She explains:

> So no, you never really believe that you'll actually die, and I sure would hate to think that I am going to, but God, the percentages are really bad. Often for long periods of time it doesn't bother me much at all. But right now, well I very recently found out that my cousin died and he was 34, which is my age.

As discussed in the previous chapter, four women (Christine, Jean, Joan and Marcela) are currently affected by their female physiology insofar as menstruation and hormonal changes affect their emotional state, energy level and sense of well-being. However, these problems are not simply a matter of individual experience; social attitudes also affect the meaning attributed to them. Christine, Jean and Joan, since understanding that the difficulties they experience are cyclical and related to their menstrual or hormonal cycles, are less critical of themselves than they used to be. The knowledge that their emotional vulnerability is physiologically based and temporary has helped them adjust to the changes they experience in themselves and to accept themselves as emotionally fragile during these times. Marcela, on the other hand, perceives her health problems as a "weakness" on her part, referring to "horrible neurotic symptoms, like migraine headaches and irregular periods" as symptoms she has "suffered unnecessarily." She also dismisses this "weakness" as typically female, and dislikes herself because of it. Thus, knowledge about their hormonal functioning is an important factor in the attitudes these women have and the kinds of judgments they make about themselves. Attitudes of members of the medical profession toward women's health problems also affects women's experience of themselves. This, however, will be discussed later under the heading "Social Factors."

Temperament

Six of the participants experienced themselves as having been "born with" a particular temperament or personality which in part determined how they responded to their experiences. Mary says: "I was a very quiet, withdrawn child. All my life I've always been withdrawn ...." Being withdrawn contributed to her becoming self-conscious at puberty, she believes, to her lack of confidence in her intellect, and to her general tendency to behave passively. As Mary looks back over her life, it appears to her that her temperament has always been a problem. She states: "I've never had self-confidence. It's something I struggle with every day of my life." Similarily, Jean perceives herself as having always been shy, timid, fearful, withdrawn and solitary. This tendency affected her in school and university and in the jobs she has held. She explains: "I was so timid that I didn't learn very fast. When you're afraid, your mind kind of blocks learning anything, and that's always been true with me on any new job." Other factors worked to reinforce these tendencies - factors involving appearance, relationships within their families and their family status in the community - factors which will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Beret and Joan speak of themselves as having "always been" of a particular temperament. Beret tells how she has always had determination and drive (like her mother) and always been affectionate toward children (like her father was toward her). In addition she was always a tomboy - always independent, active and interested in work and play outdoors. Beret's mother taught her to be determined and independent, while her father modelled affectionate behavior and reinforced her tomboy interests and activities. Beret developed a close relationship with her brother, with whom she spent much time working and playing. However, Beret's preference for outdoor activities cost her the affection of her mother, who seemed to Beret to favor her more "feminine" sister. Thus, while Beret's tomboy activities were encouraged and supported in part, it seems unlikely that she engaged in these activities simply because she was reinforced for doing so. Individual temperament seems to have played a part. Like Beret, Joan also claims to have "always been a tomboy" - always active and interested in "male" activities. Whereas Beret spent much time with her brother, Joan was one of a gang of neighborhood boys. However, here the similarity ends. Joan received no support from

her parents for her tomboy behavior. Rather, her mother modelled inactivity and dependence on Joan's stepfather, and tried to discourage Joan's tomboy activities, pleading with her to be "ladylike." Further, she refused to buy her "boys' toys," instead buying her dolls, doll houses, baby carriages, doll cutouts, etc. In spite of these attempts to restrict her behavior, Joan's interest in being active, independent and involved in so-called male activities persisted. Joan theorizes about her belief that families have little effect on their children, that one's individual temperament will win out over environmental influences:

> Because I firmly believe that it doesn't matter what kind of environment you're from, you're going to be what you're going to be. I don't know whether that's believing in fate or what, but I came from a broken family, I didn't like my step-father, my mother was always screaming at me, and I feel that I've done alright. And I've known girls that come from a super close family that are hookers in Vancouver. So I think it's what's in you, rather than what people tell you and how you're brought up. I think it's really what's in you. I think that if you're really determined that you're going to do something, then you'll do it. Does that make any sense? It makes sense to me.

It is clear from Joan's account that her preference for an active and independent life has persisted from childhood to adulthood.

Theresa and Elizabeth talked about having possibly inherited genetic tendencies. For Theresa, this involves being rebellious and determined like her mother and great-grandmother. At the same time, she recognizes that learning from these women through their modelling and teaching that women did not have to put up with beatings and insults from men affected her a great deal. In the following passage she contemplates how she came to be as she is:

> ... and I guess maybe that (her mother's independence) was sort of instilled in my mind and I accepted it. And I guess I went along the same, or maybe we both have the same rebellious nature.

The issue for Elizabeth of a genetic predisposition in her personality involves a diagnosis by members of the medical profession that she is either schizophrenic or manic-depressive, and that she inherited these tendencies. Knowing that her youngest brother committed suicide and that several other brothers have emotional problems, Elizabeth acknowledges the possibility of an inherited factor. At the same time, she knows that having been abused and emotionally neglected as children has affected her brothers as it affected her. Further, she is certain that her nurse's training, nursing experience in Vietnam, marriage, hysterectomy and ultimate disillusionment with the

medical profession all contributed to the depression she originally developed after being a physically, psychologically and sexually abused child. Elizabeth deplores any simplistic theory which pinpoints only one cause of behavior, referring to the genetic/environmental debate as the "either/or error." About this she states:

> It's always all those things! It's just a matter of at one point in time, maybe it's just a little bit more of one than the other. Plus a lot of other things you're not aware of.

For Elizabeth, as for Mary, Jean, Beret, Joan and Theresa, it may be concluded that individual temperament was one of a number of factors which affected their experience as women and the meanings they gave it.

Physical Appearance

Body size and apearance has been a major factor affecting self acceptance for three of the 13 participants, and a minor factor for two women. For Beret, being big and tall (the opposite of what she perceived the ideal image of a woman to be) was a factor that affected her as a child and continues to affect her today. Being big and tall, in and of itself, was not the problem and was probably an asset to Beret in her work on the farm. The problem stemmed from Beret's experience of being judged by others (her neighbor and her mother) because she did not fit the ideal image of what a feminine woman *should* look like. Beret explains that she was deeply affected by a neighbour who consistently commented on her size, and by the fact that her mother favored her more "feminine" sister. Images of feminine women in the media (films, books, magazines, advertising, etc.) reinforced her perception that her size was not acceptable. As a result, Beret continues to be self conscious about her size, perceiving herself as "ungainly" and "conspicuous." She dislikes this aspect of herself and wishes she were "smaller and daintier" or "average" so that she would appear more "feminine."

For Jean, body size continues to be a factor affecting her acceptance of herself because she is overweight and does not fit the ideal image of femininity which dictates that women be small, dainty and thin. Jean believes that she is disadvantaged because she is fat – that others reject her for being fat and do not understand her as a person. She believes that weight is a greater problem for women than for men because men are judged first for their achievements and women are judged first for their appearance. In fact, as regards being successful in the working world, Jean believes that it is to

women's advantage to be as invisible or standard as possible – that they are less likely to be judged by their bodies if they are neither unattractive nor very attractive. Jean judges herself to be unattractive because she is fat and consequently dislikes herself. She states:

> I have never liked my body at all, and when I dream, I dream that I look different. I have never accepted the way I look.... It comes from being fat.

Jean describes her self-rejection as having a crippling effect on her life. The devastation she has experienced began at an early age, with her awareness that she was different from her peers. "It's come from a lifetime of feeling that I was inadequate because I didn't look like everybody else." In addition to being thin, looking like everyone else meant having the right (i.e., same) hairstyle and clothing – meeting the standard set by the peer group. Jean knew she didn't meet the standard when she was a child, and feels she never will. She states:

> I'm always going to be straight off the farm, age 12, the only kid in school who wears braided hair and doesn't have any clothes like anybody else.

Mary, while not affected negatively by her appearance today, experienced herself as different (and therefore unacceptable) during adolescence in much the same way as did Jean. She states:

> I was uncomfortable with my physical self. I was overweight in junior high school and I had long, long braids. I could sit on my hair, and that set me apart from all the kids and I just felt awful. A big fat toad! I made my mother cut my hair when I went into grade seven and I lost weight and looked like the rest of the kids. But I still didn't, I never felt physically great around anyone, especially in junior high school....They (other girls) were cool, but I was just a meatball in high school.

Thus for both Jean and Mary, physical appearance in and of itself did not represent a negative experience. Rather, the experience of being perceived as different from their peers, of being judged as not fitting an acceptable image, strongly influenced Jean's and Mary's experience and the meaning of their physical appearance to them.

Although not perceiving their appearance to be a major factor affecting their experience as women, Joan and Alice did discuss their appearance as one aspect of being a woman. As an adolescent Joan felt different from the majority of her classmates because she developed physically at an early age. She was teased and became self-conscious about her appearance. As an adult, she is conscious of being 20 pounds overweight and generally feels uncomfortable about her appearance (hair and

clothing), feeling she does not portray the "successful image" she *should*, according to the experts. She states: "I don't think my image is what it's supposed to be. Like it should be a different image." For Joan the issue is the same as for Beret, Jean and Mary – her appearance was (and is) problematic because she has been perceived by others or perceives herself to be unacceptable because she does not fit an acceptable image. As with Joan, Alice dislikes herself because she is "too fat." It means to her that she is unattractive and it takes up a lot of energy – "I fight it all the time." Alice also dislikes that she talks about her weight because this means to her she does not accept herself, and consequently she loses respect for herself.

If self-rejection results from judging one's physical appearance negatively, it follows that self-acceptance results from judging one's physical appearance positively. Marcela verifies this. She describes how she feels attractive and is comfortable with her female body. This means to her that she can easily communicate with people and establish trust in relationships. She explains:

> (I like) women and men who like the way they look and who are comfortable with their physical presence. And I like that about myself. I think I'm attractive and I like myself. Being comfortable with my physical presence – well, it means first of all that you have a new instrument with which you can communicate with other people .... I just mean your relationship to yourself is the first thing that people notice, and if it's favorable then you have an easy in on a person. You can establish trust right away.... I think I'm quite comforable with my womanhood.

C. Family Relationships and Meaning

All of the 13 participants discussed family members and family dynamics as having had a significant effect on them. Mothers and fathers, and sometimes grandparents, sisters, brothers, aunts and cousins were discussed as having had either positive or negative effects. Which family members or what particular family dynamic were most significant in having either a positive or negative effect varied from woman to woman. In what manner the woman was affected by family relationships, i.e., whether behavior was modelled, expected, reinforced, discouraged, punished, ignored, etc., or whether the woman felt loved, protected, appreciated, neglected, abused, rejected, etc., in her family, also varied from woman to woman. Relationships between family members (i.e., between mother and father, mother and sister, mother and brother, mother and grandmother, husband and daughter) were also discussed as having had a

significant effect. Further, other factors relating to family composition such as number and sex of children and birth order were considered relevant factors by some of the women. Relationships within the family which had a significant effect on the women's experience as women and the meaning they attributed to their experience will be discussed as follows:

1. Relationships to Mothers
2. Relationships to Fathers
3. Family Dynamics
4. Relationships to Other Relatives

Relationships to Mothers

Nine participants stated they experienced both positive and negative aspects in their relationships with their mothers, or received conflicting messages from them. Two women discussed their relationships with their mothers as having had only a positive effect and two only a negative effect. Theresa and Heidi spoke only of positive experiences in relation to their mothers. Theresa perceived her mother as a strong and independent woman who taught her to respect herself, to value herself as equal to men and to be morally responsible in her behavior. She saw her mother as an active leader in the family and as a woman who could stand up and fight against those men (including her husband) who thought women should know their *proper place*. Heidi, although actually speaking little of her childhood in the interview, referred to her mother as loving and hard-working, and spoke of happy times, working and having fun together. She values how her parents brought her up, explaining that she wouldn't have been strong enough to withstand the abuse she suffered in her marriage if she hadn't had a good childhood.

Of those who had a conflicting relationship with their mothers, Beret, Denise and Alice experienced the relationships as primarily positive with a lesser negative effect. Beret credits her mother with having taught her to be resourceful, generous, practical, thrifty, determined, competent, strong, and independent by modelling these behaviors and by expecting them of Beret. She also believes that her mother taught her to think, and influenced her to get an education and "be something." However, Beret felt rejected by her mother because she was not feminine like her sister, and preferred working outside with her father and brother rather than sitting in the house and quietly

crocheting. Beret thought that to her mother she was a "black sheep." Denise's relationship with her mother parallels Beret's. Denise had a strong, self-educated mother who taught her to think, be broad-minded, and respect her body, who encouraged her to develop her intelligence and abilities and told her to "go out and do better" for herself. The negative aspect of Denise's relationship to her mother was that Denise perceived her mother to be closer to her sons – to be more understanding and accepting of Denise's brothers. Consequently, Denise was hurt and resentful when she felt herself being unfairly disciplined or misunderstood by her mother. The conflicting messages that Alice received from her mother differed from those received by Denise and Beret. Whereas Denise and Beret perceived their mothers valuing them less because they were either female or not the right kind of female, the conflicting messages Alice perceived involved what she should or shouldn't do as a woman. Alice saw as positive the direct message her mother gave her to go out into the world and do things for herself, and to avoid being trapped the way her mother had been. From this advice Alice learned to strive for independence and eventually become "her own person." However, Alice also learned to do what her mother actually did, which was to hide her strength, be dependent and subservient, and to avoid conflict and manipulate situations so that men think they are making the decisions. In other words, Alice learned from her mother to be passively persuasive and charming as a means to exert influence or control.

Six of the women interviewed (Sally, Jean, Madelaine, Elizabeth, Mary and Marcela) experienced their relationships to their mothers as conflicting and as largely negative. Sally's mother was physically absent when Sally was small, having left her with her grandmother for some time. Sally resented being left and felt rejected by her mother. When she later rejoined her mother, Sally experienced the relationship as lacking in communication and her mother as critical and punitive. As an adult, Sally continues to feel resentment towards her mother's interference and criticism of her life style. In spite of this, however, Sally values that her mother lives nearby and that she could go to her for help if necessary. She also feels a responsibility to live nearby her mother so that she can "be there" when her father is out on his trapline.

For Jean, Madelaine and Elizabeth, their relationships to their mothers were significantly affected by the fact that their mothers had many children (and in Jean's case

several miscarriages), were physically and emotionally exhausted from the amount of work required to take care of a large family, and had additional worries. These mothers were experienced as being unaffectionate, undemonstrative, uncommunicative or as being absent in spirit. Elizabeth feels, in addition, an anger toward her mother for not standing up to her alcoholic father and for not protecting her from being sexually abused. In spite of these negative experiences, the mothers are today valued in some way. Elizabeth values that her mother encouraged her to achieve at school, believing that her mother vicariously experienced her successes. Jean values her mother because she was strong, capable and intelligent and is a connection to her own history. Madelaine values that her mother survived a hard life and perceives her as her first connection to life itself.

Mary's conflicting feelings about her mother stem from a lack of communication and understanding between them which caused problems for Mary. For example, Mary's being unprepared for menstruation and being afraid to tell her mother she was bleeding was a traumatic event for her, one which she handled without her mother's support and understanding. Similarly, Mary's mother failed to understand and support her feelings of ethnic inferiority, inadvertently reinforcing Mary's insecurity by her own desires to negate her ethnic community and gain social status. Mary states that her memories of her mother are vague, but understands that her mother's life must have been difficult. She describes her mother as an orphaned daughter and an oppressed wife who gave up her university education to marry and was forced to conform to her husband's expectations. Mary appreciates that her mother supported her against her father somewhat during adolescence, and encouraged her to be educated to "do better" for herself. In fact, Mary studied to become a teacher because her mother desired this, even though she herself did not like or do well in her education courses.

Whereas the conflict Mary experienced with her mother seemed to be manifest in an undercurrent of misunderstanding and lack of communication, Marcela's conflict with her mother was direct and overt. Although she recalls little of her adolescence (believing it to be too painful to be remembered), Marcela experienced her mother as hostile, controlling and punitive. Having some distance from the relationship she now understands that her mother had a difficult life. She had to compromise her career

ambitions to satisfy first her father and then her husband. Eventually she built a successful career in the business world without the support of her husband and in spite of 1950s attitudes which idealized women who stayed at home. That her husband was an alcoholic created additional stress. Marcela believes that her mother felt jealous of Marcela's freedom and of the affection she received from her father when he had been drinking, and that this was one aspect of her anger toward Marcela. On the positive side, however, Marcela feels that her mother has always been supportive of her pursuing an academic career and today is proud of her achievements. She has come to respect her mother for her own accomplishments too, and for the fact of her valuing her ethnic heritage. Understanding the difficulties her mother had and appreciating her strengths now, Marcela feels less hurt by the relationship than she once did. She maintains, however, that for the present she likes the *idea* of family more than the reality.

Joan and Christine experienced their relationships with their mothers as largely negative. Joan lived with her grandmother until age eight when her mother married her stepfather. Living with her mother and stepfather, she saw herself as very different from her mother, who was emotionally and financially dependent, who didn't want to work outside the home and who passively watched TV. Unlike her mother, Joan wanted to "be something." Her mother seemed not to accept that Joan was different from her and tried to insist she be "ladylike" and play with dolls. Conversations about menstruation and sexuality were non-existent; sex was a "dirty word." Joan quit school in grade 10, moved away from home, and enrolled in business college. She and her mother never did learn to communicate.

Christine's relationship to her mother centered around the large amount of work expected of Christine (and not of her brothers) to help her mother care for a family of seven brothers and an abusive, alcoholic father. She recalls that if she ever wanted to sit around and do nothing like her brothers, her mother told her she was lazy. She resents not only that she was expected to be always responsible at home and to work at part-time jobs to earn money, but that she was not encouraged to achieve anything more for herself – that she was "just prepared to grow up and be somebody's wife." Christine's relationship with her mother was also negative in that her mother failed to

protect her from a sexually abusive father. Rather, Christine became her mother's protector from her violent husband, a role she continued to play to her own detriment until adulthood, when as a mother of two children of her own, she could no longer bear the burden of responsibility for her mother.

Relationships to Fathers

Relationships to their fathers formed a different pattern for the women than did their relationships to their mothers. Four of the 13 participants perceived them to have been strongly positive, two perceived them to have been intensely conflicted, and three perceived them to have been strongly negative. Of the remaining four participants, two perceived their fathers as having had much less effect on them than did their mothers and two perceived their relationships to their fathers as having been of little or no importance.

The four women who experienced their relationships with their fathers as overwhelmingly positive were Denise, Beret, Heidi and Sally. Denise perceived her father to be a wise man who prepared his daughters to take their rightful places in the world along with their brothers. He encouraged his children to read, think, question and discuss ideas, to get as much education as possible, to develop their capabilities and to work honestly. Most important to Denise, especially because her mother favored her brothers, was that her father believed and taught his children that women were as valuable and as worthy of respect as were men. She has, as a result of her father's attitudes, carried a feeling of self-respect and self-confidence with her throughout her lifetime.

Beret describes her father as a kind, affectionate man who was always willing to help his neighbours or lend money to people in need. Being a tomboy she spent much time working with him outside on the farm and she felt very close to him. She also learned from him an affection toward children, which led to her decision to become a teacher. Especially important to Beret was that, unlike her mother, her father did not require her to fit a particular image or role; he accepted her for what she was – big and tall, active and interested in being outside with the men. In her words, "...to him I was just all right the way I was." Unfortunately for Beret, her father was not a strong man, and he died when she was a child. Thus she lost the person upon whom she depended

the most. She thinks that as a result she became strong and independent at an early age, which made leaving home to attend high school an easy adjustment.

As stated above, Heidi didn't speak much about her childhood in the interview. What she did say about her father was entirely positive, however. She speaks about working in the fields with him and him telling stories while they worked. She was especially close to her father it seems, since her mother was often sick and in the hospital. Heidi credits her good upbringing and the loving care she experienced as a child from both of her parents with having made her a person strong enough to survive her husband's abuse.

Sally perceives her father as a loving person to whom she has always felt close. She tells how when she was a young teenage mother, she assisted her father in his commercial fishing work, even taking her baby with them in the boat, because she wanted to help him make a living. Part of Sally's love for her father seems to be that she feels sorry for him, perceiving that her mother betrayed him as she did Sally. She seems to want to protect her father, both from the knowledge she has about her mother's past behavior and from her own present behavior and problems – information she does not keep from her mother. She explains that she has already hurt her father enough by becoming pregnant at 15. Thus it appears that Sally's idealization of her relationship with her father involves a certain amount of deception.

Marcela and Jean had relationships with their fathers that were intense with both positive and negative feelings. Marcela experienced an intense relationship with her father that was filled with conflict. As a young child, she described herself as her "father's daughter": as wanting to please him by being both feminine and competent and as wanting to be like him – creative, intelligent, sensitive and nurturing. During adolescence, the relationship became more complex and negative aspects developed. Marcela learned that her father was weak and incapable of being responsible or practical, and that his alchoholism was a symptom of this. She began to lose respect for him. Marcela felt conflicted, however, because it was when her father was drinking that he gave of himself, intellectually and emotionally, to her. She also felt conflicted about her father because even though he represented to her what she might achieve in terms of being intelligent and creative, and was the only parent to offer nurturance, he judged

her decision to leave the Fashion and Modelling School as weak – as the decision of a gypsy. She sensed that he did not really want her to achieve success at university and surpass his own accomplishments. Further, it disappoints her that he does not value his ethnic heritage, an aspect of her own life which has become central to her studies and work.

Jean, too, had conflicting feelings about her father, although the nature of the conflict was very different from what Marcela experienced. She perceived her father to be a shy and gentle man who had a "special touch with babies" and who not only liked women but preferred the company of women to that of men. Jean admired her father and felt lucky to have grown up in a non-sexist household. Her father wanted her to be married so that she would have someone to care for her, she recalls. The conflict for Jean arises insofar as her father was not a stong man, eventually became very ill and unable to work, and almost died. She experienced his possible death as frightening, and recognized his inability to work as a threat to their already vulnerable financial situation. Thus, while her father's gentleness was something she admired, his illness reinforced her fearful and timid outlook and compounded her emotional insecurity.

The relationships to their fathers experienced by Theresa and Alice seem to have had less impact on them than those discussed thus far. Theresa appreciated that as one of the girls on a farm, she was not restricted in her behavior or in the kind of work she did, explaining that she often helped her father by driving the tractor when she was only 11 years old. At the same time, she recognizes that her father has a chauvinistic attitude toward women – women should know their *proper place* and be subservient to men. This attitude did not affect Theresa, however, because she saw her mother fight her father's attitude directly and actively. In fact, Theresa sees her father as having had little influence on his children – he mostly stayed in the background while her mother took the responsibility for bringing up and disciplining the children.

Alice speaks of her father, too, as having had traditional expectations of her – that she would get married and settle down and that some other man would one day take care of "his little girl." In later years, he supported her endeavors to live an independent life and set up her own business. However, he seems to have had less impact on her than did her mother, being largely in the background.

Christine, Elizabeth and Mary perceived their relationships with their fathers as having had a strongly negative effect on them. Christine's father abused her sexually and she disliked and mistrusted him. She confronted him with his incestuous behavior when she noticed him beginning to abuse her younger sister. However, she recalls that even after the incest stopped, he continued to treat her as a sexual object, commenting on her body and wanting her to sit on his lap. The effect on Christine was that she did not feel respected by her father and felt ashamed of her father and of herself. Christine was also afraid of her father's violence and was aware of her mother's need to be protected from him – a need she attempted to meet for many years. She generally felt helpless in the face of her father's violence and powerless to change the situation.

Elizabeth was also sexually abused by her alcoholic father. This experience had different levels of meaning for her. On one level she simply categorized the sexual abuse as part of the general abuse and neglect she experienced throughout childhood from both parents. She rationalized that her sacrifice would bring its own reward in heaven, a lesson she learned in church and from the nuns at school. On another level she was aware that other little girls were loved and protected in a way that she was not, concluded that she was unequal to them – a "ruined" person, and felt socially alienated. Elizabeth developed a belief that men were incapable of being responsible for themselves or for others, and that she should not expect much from them. It came as no surprise to her that professional men with whom she later worked or to whom she went for help, would exploit and sexually abuse her.

Mary experienced her father as a man with traditional Hispanic values – a man who loves God, his family and his wife. However, he was rigid and oppressive in his behavior, was critical and possessive of Mary's mother and frequently lost his temper with the children. Mary describes how she "clashed horribly" with her father during adolescence. She felt guilty about enjoying rock and roll music and wanting to go out to dances with boys, because her father saw this as sinful. His attitudes toward sex (women should not be overtly sexual but men could be) made Mary feel ashamed of her developing sexuality. Consequently, she repressed her sexual feelings until she left home and to this day she remains self-conscious about her body.

Joan and Madelaine did not speak of their fathers as having had any particular effect on them. Joan apparently did not know her biological father because she did not mention him. She lived initially with her grandmother and at age eight moved in with her newly-married mother and stepfather. She didn't like her stepfather at first, perceiving him as someone who was strict and authoritarian, who never showed emotion and who was not supportive. Today she sees him as a "good guy now" who "put up with a fair amount with me." Like Joan, Madelaine said little about her father, except that she recalls him "being friendly" with her mother (patting or caressing her) and her mother not liking it. Other than that, she has the impression of an extreme lack of communication and lack of warmth and in its place "so much negative." The result for Madelaine was that she thought she was "a terrible person." About men and women generally, she assumed they led separate lives and related only around sex, which had to be hidden.

Family Dynamics, Birth Order, Size and Composition

While relationships to individual parents had an effect on the women interviewed, the dynamics between parents also had an effect. The fact of having parents who were close and mutually respectful was seen by Beret, Heidi and Denise as having had a positive effect on their lives. They all see themselves as loving and capable of giving to others. Jean also saw her parents as close and mutually respectful. Other factors however (her mother's exhaustion and emotional distance, her father's illness and the family's poverty and social isolation) seem to have countered any positive effects that might have come from the positive parent dynamic.

Alice and Mary were affected by having grown up in families where their fathers were dominant and their mothers subservient and constantly trying to appease their husbands. Both women today have trouble asserting themselves or directly taking power in relationships. Theresa, on the other hand, witnessed a dynamic whereby her mother refused to be subservient and actively fought Theresa's father's chauvinistic attitudes. Theresa today has no trouble asserting herself directly and actually enjoys the challenge of being a woman in this sense. She feels herself to be an equal partner in her marriage. Joan's mother was dependent on Joan's authoritarian stepfather. However, Joan felt distanced from her parents, feeling herself to be different from her mother and disliking her stepfather. She consciously desires a marriage in which there is no

power struggle and in which she feels equal and respected. However, she has difficulty assuming an equal status and acting on it, having had a mother who modelled passive, dependent behavior.

Tension and/or emotional distance between their parents likely contributed to problems of emotional insecurity and personal instability experienced by Elizabeth, Christine, Marcela and Madelaine when they were adolescents and young adults. Elizabeth and Christine eventually worked out their emotional problems with the help of therapists. Marcela and Madelaine appear to have unresolved emotional conflicts which seem to reduce their self-confidence and magnify their fears. Marcela copes by dismissing her fears and emotions as weak and indicative of her "female irrationality." Madelaine copes by largely refraining from taking risks in her marriage and by confining her activities to those which do not threaten her husband. For Sally, the trauma of the separation of her parents and her consequent separation from both of them when she was a young child has certainly affected her life. Later, when she and they were reunited, she feared that any confrontation of her mother by herself would result in another separation, so she withdrew. To this day, she blames her mother for the separation and feels a need to protect her father. In addition, her fear of confrontation persists – she has dificulty confronting her mother and other people as well.

Family dynamics in terms of family size, birth order, sex of siblings and interactions between parents and siblings also were important factors for some of the women interviewed. Being the eldest daughter in a large family had a very significant effect on Christine and Elizabeth. (Elizabeth was also the only daughter.) Both women were expected to take care of household duties and their younger siblings, sharing or even assuming the responsibilities of their mothers at an early age. Both women suffered depression and emotional exhaustion as young women. Elizabeth made a conscious decision to never have children of her own, because she felt she had dispensed with all of her "mothering energy" by the time she reached age 18. Christine had two children of her own, found the work of maintaining a household, a husband, two children and her mother exhausting, became ill and depressed and eventually left her marriage to find a more satisfying life for herself.

Being a child from a large family seems to have meant going without emotional nurturance for middle children as well as for older children. Madelaine, a middle child in a family of 13, felt that she was given no affection or encouragement and that she missed out on something. As a result, she spent years searching for a sense of herself after she left home. She also found herself having difficulty in her marriage and lacking a feeling of love for her own children. Jean, too, felt there was never enough love to go around in her family of five children. The additional worries her parents had about poverty and illness and her mother's emotional distance compounded this experience. The effect on Jean was to make her extremely insecure and fearful, feelings that remain with her and continue to inhibit her today. Denise was also a middle child in a large family. She saw this as having been a positive aspect of her life for she is now very close to her brothers and sisters. However, she was aware of her mother not having enough time for her because of the amount of work needing to be done to maintain such a large household.

Sex of siblings seems to have been an important factor for two of the women interviewed. Being the eldest of three daughters living on a farm, Theresa assumed the responsibilities typically given to a boy – she became a farm-hand and drove a tractor at age 11. This experience gave her the skills and confidence to again take on jobs defined as male when she was an adult. Jean, an only sister with four brothers, had the opposite experience to Theresa. She wasn't needed to do farm work so didn't learn the skills and gain confidence to attempt "men's jobs." Further, she felt of little value because she perceived her lunch-making and house-cleaning jobs to be less important than the outside jobs done by her brothers.

Relationships to Relatives Other Than Mother or Father

Relationships to other family members were mentioned by all of the women interviewed. However, these relationships appeared to be significant for only six of the 13 women. Grandmothers and aunts seem generally to have had the greatest impact. Theresa and Marcela were strongly influenced by their grandmothers in a positive way. Theresa admires her great-grandmother's strength and ability to manage a farm and raise five children on her own. She also admires that her great-grandmother stood up to her husband, refused to take his beatings, went to jail for him when he was caught making

moonshine because he was too afraid to go himself, and finally decided to tolerate him no longer – "gave him the boot and told him to get." Theresa thinks her great-grandmother was "a liberated lady" in her time and wonders how she managed to survive without any emotional or financial support from society. Further, she believes her great-grandmother has something to teach women today about being "strong enough to holler and fight for what they want" in order to make changes. Marcela was positively influenced by both grandmothers. She thought of her Hungarian grandmother as the ideal woman – someone who was artistic, creative and intelligent and yet could be nurturing, strong and practical, too. The latter qualities appeared to be in sharp contrast with the men in Marcela's family who, although they were very loving and supportive of her endeavors, seemed weak and incompetent. Unfortunately this grandmother died and Marcela was left without an important source of affection and support at a time when she especially needed it. Marcela's Slovak grandmother was also supportive. She sent Marcela to an expensive fashion school, and Marcela believes that this grandmother would have supported her in any endeavor.

Mary speaks of her grandparents as exerting a big influence on her life, although she did not see the effect as entirely positive. Her grandparents were upwardly mobile people, she explains, who valued "the buck" and put a monetary value on love. It embarrassed Mary to be the favorite grandchild who received the most expensive gifts. Mary's grandparents did have high expectations for her to go to college and be educated. However, they also tried to influence Mary to enter a career of their choosing (preferably secretarial work or teaching) so that she would make good money and be financially secure. Even more preferable would be for Mary to go to college and find a rich husband. Thus the influence from Mary's grandparents to go to college was strong, but in a sense undermined her sense of self-confidence and worth – she should not go to college to develop herself but to find someone to look after her.

Joan and Sally both lived with their grandmothers when they were young children but they said little or nothing about the effect their grandmothers had on them. When questioned about this, Sally replied that she didn't like staying with her grandmother because there were too many other people living there, the uncles and male cousins teased her and she missed her mother. Elizabeth referred to her grandmother also in a

negative sense. She perceived her to be like her mother, locked into a narrow-minded view of the word which results in her being a closed and critical person. Elizabeth hopes never to be like her grandmother.

As was stated earlier, aunts also had a strong impact on some of the women interviewed. Theresa talked about one aunt in particular, a widow, whom she admired for raising four daughters and running a farm on her own. She used to be able to talk to this aunt when she felt troubled about things in her own family, and she felt understood and supported by her. Speaking with this aunt gave her another perspective, she thinks, which enabled her to happily return to her own family, feeling better. Sally similarly experienced support and understanding in relation to a particular aunt and uncle. They talked to her about her choices when at 15 she became pregnant, and offered to help her with whatever decision she made. They have remained a close and understanding source of support to Sally. Sally also has a close relationship to an older female cousin with whom she once lived, who actually looked after her more than did her mother. Sally still feels especially close to this cousin, perceiving her as someone she can talk to when she's having trouble with her mother.

Aunts were perceived by Jean and Alice to have a negative effect on their experience of themselves as women. Both women are single, and continually experience at family gatherings a judgment on the part of their aunts that they have somehow failed as women because they are single. The career accomplishments of both women tend not to be valued. Alice experiences this judgement as uncomfortable but feels no need to apologize for her single status because she enjoys it. Jean, however, is deeply hurt by her aunts' judgment, aware that it touches her own feelings of failure and inadequacy and her perception of herself as unlovable.

Apart from Sally and Mary, only one other woman mentioned uncles and grandfathers as having had an impact on their lives. Marcela talks about her extended family of uncles and grandfathers for whom she performed at family gatherings. Being the only granddaughter she also assumed other responsibilities in the family for which she received much reinforcement. She perceives this early training and encouragement as having given her confidence to go out and achieve in the world outside of her home and community. On a practical level, however, she perceived the men in her family as

less capable than the women.

Relationships with siblings were discussed to only a small extent by the women interviewed. Beret discussed being jealous of her feminine sister and close to her brother. Denise mentioned being supported more by her brothers than her sisters when she was a widow, but generally feels close to both sisters and brothers now. Marcela spoke of having to take care of her brother who was handicapped with arthritis. Elizabeth felt fond of the brothers she once cared for, seeing them as her only source of love, but has little contact with them now. Christine, who once resented the brothers and sisters she cared for, also feels fond of them now. Theresa and Mary feel fond of their siblings but have largely replaced family with friends. Heidi writes to her sister and brother in Germany but has seen them only twice since she came to Canada. Madelaine feels especially close to some of her siblings and wishes she could see them more often than she does. Joan and Sally have siblings much younger than themselves of whom they feel fond, but there is too much of an age gap for them to feel close.

D. Social Factors and Meaning

Numerous social forces were considered to have a significant effect on the lives of the women interviewed because of their impact on the individual woman or her family, thereby influencing the meaning women gave to their experiences. They will be discussed in the following order:

1. Family's Status in the Community
2. Friends
3. Social Norms and Generational Cohort
4. Professionals and Institutional Policies

Family's Status in the Community

The status (social and/or financial) of the family of origin in the community was discussed as having had an important effect on their lives by eight of the 13 participants. Two women felt they benefited and two felt disadvantaged as a result of their family's social status. A fifth woman both benefited and suffered in relation to her family's social status. Beret and Denise both felt their family's social status in their communities to be a positive factor. Beret describes how her parents took responsibility for

community needs by assuming executive positions in organizations, holding school board meetings in their home, boarding the country school teacher, keeping the assessment role and collecting taxes. In addition they generously shared their possessions with people in need. Thus, Beret's parents were respected in the community and Beret was proud of them. Denise also respected her parents and their status in their community. She describes with pride how they shared food and possessions with others during the Depression. That her parents were self-educated and valued reading, thinking, discussing and developing the mind through education seemed to her prestigious. She was also impressed that her mother spoke three languages: German, French and Cree.

In contrast to the experience of Beret and Denise, Jean and Elizabeth felt their family's social status had a negative effect on their lives. Jean describes how a number of factors contributed to her family's alienation from their community: they moved twice and were considered outsiders, her parents were shy people who preferred an isolated life on the farm, and her parents assumed nontraditional gender-roles (father was often ill at home and mother worked in the community) which made them different from other families. Elizabeth felt disadvantaged in her community because her father was a known alcoholic. Further, she secretly felt unequal to others because of her father's incestuous behavior toward her.

Heidi both benefited and suffered at different times in relation to her family's social status. Living in German occupied Czecholslovakia during World War II, her father (one of only two young men left in their community) was made officially responsible for the needs of all the families in the surrounding farming community. It was a position of honor and Heidi was proud, even though it meant that she and her sister had to take over the farm work at home. After the war ended and the communist Czechoslovakian government took over, Heidi's family (along with other German families) lost their farm and their freedoms, experienced discrimination, were put into concentration camps and were eventually shipped in cattle cars as refugees to Germany. (Heidi was 16 at the time.)

Two women seem to have benefited from, and five women were hindered by their family's financial status. The relative financial security of Beret's family added to their social status in the community. Her father had enough money to be able to lend

some to others and the family was the only one in the community to keep their phone during the Depression. Beret claims to have never felt the effects of the Depression the way others did. She also benefited from her family's financial status in that they could afford to send her away to high school and to normal school for teacher training. Alice benefited from her family's financial security in the same way – she was given the opportunity to go to university without worrying about how to pay for it. After university, she never worried about having to work – her family could afford to support her.

Their families financially insecurity affected the lives of five of the 13 participants in various ways. In Mary's and Jean's families, tensions and insecurity resulted from financial insecurity and seems to have affected their own emotional security during childhood. Mary's family was upwardly mobile, however, and could afford to send her away to college after high school. Jean's family could not afford to educate her after high school, however, so she went out to work for two years. Then, determined to become independent and to gain a sense of security in herself, she worked to put herself through university. Christine and Joan also experienced tension and insecurity in their families as a result of poverty. Christine was required to work at various jobs throughout her childhood to help maintain her large family. Unlike Mary and Jean, however, she did not perceive the possibility of having a different life. Christine was not encouraged to get an education or achieve success or independence – she would simply be a wife and mother like her own mother. Joan, too, was never encouraged to achieve at school or in a career. However, she felt she was different from her mother and vowed to "be something." There was no money for her to go to university so she attended business college on a government grant and became a secretary.

No mention was made of Sally's family being poor when she was a child. However, that being poor did affect her life significantly can be assumed from her stories of fishing with her father to help him make a living and being beaten by her husband for feeding her family a meal. Sally never spoke of currently being poor until after the interview. While answering the questionnaire, she revealed that she was living on a total of $485 per month, including a Widow's Allowance and Family Allowance.

Friends

Having childhood friends who could give support, share knowledge or otherwise satisfy a need that could not be met in the family was a matter of importance to five of the 13 women interviewed. Elizabeth speaks of a man she worked for when a child, who became like a father substitute to her, offering her the encouragement and support she did not get at home. Theresa describes a relationship she developed as a teenager, with a newly-married young woman, who provided her with information about her developing sexuality, a topic her mother found awkward. Alice and Beret talked about belonging to a group of friends. Interestingly, for Alice the focus in her group was often playing at being homemakers (when they were younger) or speculating about future husbands and weddings (when they were older). The groups assumed marriage to be the only goal for women. In Alice's words:

> We really didn't consider any other alternatives. Careers and doing that kind of thing was something that people did who didn't have the feminine qualities to get married and settle down and fall in love and all that kind of stuff.

Beret's group was quite different. They were actively involved in sports and games and going to dances in groups. Further, she was part of a small gang of three girls who delighted in their "escapades." (This might mean inviting two young men for a drive in their car and pushing out the one judged to be undesirable.) Belonging also meant to Beret belonging to her friends' families, and belonging to the families she boarded with as a student in high school and normal school and as a young teacher. These experiences and connections were considered valuable by Beret, and they are now a part of the memories she cherishes. Joan's significant experience of belonging involved her active participation in the gang of neighborhood boys, who treated her as their little sister. She has always been more interested in men's activities than in women's she explains, and always found men a lot more interesting to talk to because "they were always *doing* things, whereas women were just sort of *waiting*."

Feeling they did not belong to their peer group led to feelings of inferiority for four of the women. Jean and Mary attributed their rejection on the part of their peers to their weight and appearance. Their feelings of inferiority were probably compounded by other insecurities as well. That Jean's insecurity developed in relation to poverty, her parents' ill health and their social isolation has already been discussed. Mary's being

caught in her parents' struggle for upward mobility, out of the minority status which was her Hispanic heritage, will be discussed under the major heading, "Cultural/Political Factors and Meaning," which will follow. Not belonging was a status Elizabeth imposed on herself in reaction to her feeling of being "ruined" due to her experience as an incest victim. Marcela felt a conflict about belonging: as a teenager she wanted to be liked and be part of her peer group, but she rejected the attitudes and values of the group which put men first and assumed female friendships to be less important.

Current friendships and their meaning to 12 of the 13 women interviewed were discussed in the previous chapter under the heading "Finding Satisfaction in Achieving Relationships." Suffice it to say here that friends are perceived as very important by the 12 women because they are people with whom they can enjoy and share themselves, they are understanding, accepting and reinforcing (especially when they are in similar situations to the woman), and they participate together in an experience of mutual concern and support. Friendships with women were emphasized more than friendships with men.

Professionals and Institutional Policies

Various professional people who held positions of authority by virtue of their knowledge or their being representatives of social institutions seemed to have had a significant impact on the lives of the women interviewed. Also seen as having an effect were certain policies and practices of social institutions and government. These social factors will be discussed in the following order:

1. Teachers and Educational Policy
2. Doctors and Medical Practices
3. Therapists: Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Social Workers
4. The Catholic Church: Nuns, Priests, and Doctrine
5. Other Professionals and Policies

1. Teachers and Educational Policy:

Six women perceived certain teachers as having had a memorable effect on them. Elizabeth, Madelaine and Christine saw particular teachers as having had a positive effect on their lives because they were understanding and supportive, and encouraged them at school. This was important to Madelaine because she felt

neglected and unappreciated at home. Elizabeth, who was abused and given too much responsibility at home, experienced her teachers' approval and support as such a powerful force that she dared not risk annoying them for fear of losing their approval. Even after moving from one city to another, she kept up a correspondence with teachers to whom she felt particularly close. Elizabeth also recalls specific teachers who encouraged her to read, think, study languages and science, write plays and compete in public speaking. Successful academic achievement became for Elizabeth a means of personal validation and of redeeming her family in the eyes of the community, as well a means for her to escape the exploitation she suffered in her family. It is important to note that for the first eight years of her schooling, Elizabeth was taught by nuns who reinforced her religious beliefs, supported her emotionally and encouraged her academically. A nun who was the dean of her faculty at university was also very supportive to Elizabeth. When Elizabeth's mother pleaded with her to return home to take care of the family, the dean instructed Elizabeth to remain at the college, telling her it was her parents' responsibility, not hers, to care for their family. Thus, throughout her school and university years Elizabeth experienced her teachers as an extremely positive and supportive influence. Christine, who as a child had never been encouraged to achieve at school, once attended an English course at the university as a mature student where she encountered, as her teacher, a bright young woman. Meeting a woman who had a career that she enjoyed made a big impression on Christine and she decided that it was time that she, too, tried to achieve something for herself. The teacher became a positive role model.

Theresa, Sally and Marcela recall particular teachers, all male, as having had a negative impact. Theresa still remembers with anger an experience with a particular male teacher whom she perceives to have discriminated against the girls in his class. Specifically, he criticized the girls severely for their active play and admonished them for "spoiling" their bodies for their future husbands. Theresa was furious at the injustice of the differential treatment she experienced and at the implication that her body needed to be protected for a man's sake. Sally was also upset by the differential treatment she was forced by a male teacher to

experience. In her case the teacher sexually harassed her. When she complained to the school principal (also male) about her teacher's behavior, she was told to ignore it. Unable to cope and angry at having to put up with the teacher's harrassment, she left school and was eventually expelled for refusing to return. Marcela, too, has been negatively affected by male teachers, in her case, male professors. The problem for her was not that she was treated unjustly by her professors, but that because they were exclusively male and she never experienced a female role model, she came to believe that she could never succeed like these men, simply because she was a woman. Thus, even when she was obviously succeeding, the absence of female professors in her department reinforced Marcela's belief, adopted earlier in her life, that females were not as intelligent as males.

2. Doctors and Medical Practices:

Medical doctors had a significant effect on six of the 13 women interviewed. Joan and Heidi were very appreciative of the understanding and support they received from their family doctors (both male) when they were depressed. Both women were given tranquilizers as a temporary solution to their depression, and the advice to change their lifestyle in order to help themselves. Thus, with their doctors' support, Joan found a babysitter for her children and went out to work and Heidi eventually left her husband. Christine found her doctor to be supportive and respectful when he indicated to her that in order to save her health, she must not have more children and should probably have a hysterectomy. Important to Christine was that her doctor discussed with her the pros and cons of various solutions, made his recommendation and left the decision to her. Also important to her was the quality of care she received while recuperating from surgery. However, prior to this incident she had also been afraid to approach her doctor to ask for an abortion. She feared he would judge her and that her inability to cope with another child would not be understood.

Theresa, too, has had both good and bad experiences with doctors and medical practices. She spoke in detail about her experiences. At times when she was suffering from serious ovarian and uterine problems she encountered various

male doctors who without an examination of any kind told her she should have a hysterectomy because she "probably had cancer," who took no time to discuss her problem or alternative solutions, who seemed to see her concerns as an inconvenience to themselves, who told her that her uterus was no good to her because it was "just a baby carriage," and who she feels dismissed her as a neurotic – "a nutso woman" – when she questioned their treatment plans. After much searching Theresa eventually found a male doctor who treated her with respect, listened to her concerns and sensitively planned with her the surgery she required. While in the hospital prior to surgery Theresa had a very disappointing encounter with a female intern whom she had hoped would have empathy for her concerns. The young intern seemed quite unwilling and unable to listen to Theresa's concerns and appeared very tense and mechanical. Theresa wondered if perhaps she had been "molded" into perceiving patients in a particular way and was afraid to react on a human level. Theresa has become mistrustful of most doctors because, in addition to her own negative experiences, she is aware through her work of doctors' mistreatment of women in her own community. She is especially aware of certain doctors' inclination to perform hysterectomies on women who complain of backache and to give women tranquilizers for many complaints.

Like Theresa, Elizabeth has had both positive and negative experiences with doctors, and has found that the sex of the doctor does not determine the doctor's ability to understand. A female doctor failed to take seriously Elizabeth's complaints that the birth control pill she was using was making her depressed. She dismissed Elizabeth's depression, calling it a "neurotic complaint" related to her Catholic background. Elizabeth appreciated a male doctor offering her the solution of a hysterectomy to correct her heavy blood and iron loss during menstruation. However, she was aware that the surgery might not have been warranted and that a less drastic treatment such as a D & C was not first tried or even suggested. This indicates to her that unnecessary surgery is being performed. Another male doctor, who in his partner's absence checked Elizabeth after the surgery, treated her in a patronizing and punitive manner, telling her the surgery was a mistake and she would regret it. Elizabeth, being a member of the medical profession herself,

was disturbed not only by the effect of the doctor's criticism of herself but also by his criticism of his partner. Neither doctor was concerned with the emotional repercussions she suffered as a direct result of the surgery. Elizabeth's growing realization that doctors typically do not understand women's problems and do not seriously attend to women's complaints was reinforced when she encountered a fourth doctor who explained to her that the depression she experienced after surgery resulted from the symbolic meaning of the loss of menstruation. Elizabeth's professional relationship to the doctors she has worked with has also been both positive and negative. As a young nurse, she was shocked to discover that she was expected by doctors not to think and not to question, but only to carry out their orders. Forms of extreme nursing (emergency and operating room) provided some relief from these patronizing relationships because nurses' behavior was crucial and there was no time for playing power games. Her experience of sexual harrassment by doctors in Vietnam, however, combined with their neglect of their patients in favor of playing golf, contributed to her eventual decision to leave nursing.

Sally does not refer to a particular experience with a doctor, but rather to her impression that the medical profession generally does not understand or respect women. She recalls the experience of a friend, who went to her doctor with a specific complaint and was given "tranquilizers or Valium." Sally believes that whereas doctors treat women as if they're "crazy" when they have certain complaints, they treat men differently. She perceives doctors' practice of not taking women seriously as analagous to the general lack of respect men have for women in marriages and in society at large.

3. Therapists: Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Social Workers

Four of the 13 women interviewed had both positive and negative experiences with various types of therapists. Christine tells how she was in therapy at one time or another for nine and a half years, from the time she met her husband until she left him. She was constantly depressed, which she now understands to have been related to the responsibilities she assumed and abuse she suffered as a child, and to her dissatisfaction with her role as a housewife. The

depression was triggered at different times by Christine's physical illnesses and by the physical and emotional exhaustion she experienced as a full-time mother/wife/homemaker and part-time paid worker who put her husband through school. Christine saw a variety of different therapists during these years and her therapeutic experiences varied from highly constructive to highly destructive. She initially sought help (after she'd broken her back and found herself emotionally distraught) from a female psychiatrist who helped her to "explore my past and express my sadness." A series of moves led to her involvement with a variety of social workers: a blind, male social worker who helped her "by being so nice and setting an example," another social worker (female) who helped her cope with constant ill health and surgeries and who eventually became a friend, and a third social worker (female) who helped her cope with her son's difficult behavior and her own frustrations. Most helpful of all was her involvement with a feminist psychologist (female) whom Christine believes to have helped her in a number of ways. She explains:

> She really turned my head around.... really enabled me to express all the sadness and pain I had felt in my past.... showed me what was going on down deep inside.... and was a strong woman and just by her example I think she helped me.

Prior to this, however, Christine had an experience with a male psychiatrist which she now understands to have been sexual harassment. She stopped seeing him, angry that a person in a trustworthy position from whom she was seeking help would abuse his position and be the source of further distress for her. Christine explained that she was sorry later that she never reported him, but didn't feel she could go through the hassle it would involve, feeling sure it would result in a battle - his word against hers.

Mary has mixed feelings about the therapists she saw when she was in the process of separating from her husband. She felt understood and supported by a female psychiatrist who put her on Elavil (an antidepressant) and sent her to a social worker for therapy. Mary was not particularly pleased with the social worker (also female), whom she believes inaccurately diagnosed her as wanting to be put on a pedestal and as having married someone like her father. However, she continued seeing her because she admired her bluntness. Jean feels positive about the

therapist she saw for career and supportive counselling while she was a university student. He was a student, too, and she liked him and indeed did feel supported. At the same time she is aware that he told her what to do – provided solutions and made decisions for her.

Elizabeth has a long history of seeing psychiatrists in relation to her depression, which began in childhood, was suppressed in nursing, was compounded in Vietnam and which eventually grew out of control during her marriage and after her hysterectomy. Elizabeth's experience with psychiatrists has been largely negative. She recalls that they believed she had either fantasized or provoked her father's incestuous behavior. Not until 1980, at the age of 40, when she heard a radio program on incest and phoned the Rape Crisis Center for information did she encounter the idea that she was a "victim" of incest and that "it was not my fault." All of her life she had believed she was the "guilty one" – a belief reinforced by about 20 psychiatrists (all male). Elizabeth also believes her experience with psychiatrists to have been destructive in that they refused to accept her interpretation of her distress, diagnosed and treated her on the basis of their medical categories of "illness," assumed her to be unlike themselves (i.e., not normal), and avoided dealing with the situational factors that were contributing to her depression, such as her Vietnam War experience, her career crisis, her marriage, her hysterectomy, etc. Elizabeth was caught in a bind: she desperately needed treatment, yet her interpretation of her experience was denied. When she dared to disagree with the psychiatrists she was labelled uncooperative and dishonest. Yet these were the experts, the people she had been taught to respect and whom she wanted to trust. She felt discredited, humiliated and degraded. Psychologists were not any more helpful to Elizabeth than were the psychiatrists. Some psychologists who were leaders of an outpatient therapy group insisted, as had the psychiatrists, that Elizabeth fit her experience and problems to their theories. They encouraged her to tell her lover that she could not be responsible for him and that she believed he could take care of himself. She did as she was instructed and the lover committed suicide. Another psychologist, a leader of a gestalt encounter group which Elizabeth became involved in when still married,

took advantage of her sexually when she was very vulnerable. She was not surprised and did not blame him, having learned at a young age that men could not be trusted to be responsible. During the time of the interview, Elizabeth was seeing a feminist psychologist (female) whom she said she respected. This therapist had taught her to pay attention to her own feelings and value her own experiences, she explained. Elizabeth is now beginning to see herself as valid and the world as crazy, instead of vice-versa.

4. The Catholic Church: Nuns, Priests, and Doctrine:

Four of the 13 women spoke of how nuns, priests and church doctrine or church attendance had affected their lives. The impact of the nuns who taught Elizabeth both in grade school and at university has already been discussed. What has not yet been discussed is the impact on Elizabeth of church doctrine, specifically, what she describes as the Catholic notion of self-sacrifice and placing oneself secondary to the common good. These ideas were particularly meaningful to her insofar as she felt that her suffering from too much responsibility, emotional neglect and sexual abuse in her family had some ultimate meaning, and that some day she would be rewarded for her suffering. Thus her religious beliefs helped Elizabeth to survive a family life which was otherwise devastating. The ideas of suffering and of the common good are still important to Elizabeth today. She believes that the "me first" philosophy of many humanistic psychologists is selfish, and further believes that she has learned and continues to learn from her own suffering. On the negative side, however, Elizabeth has learned that the church-supported idea of large families is less than ideal because in a large family it is impossible for parents to find the time and energy to take care of everyone's emotional needs. She herself was not aware of an emotional dimension to life until she went away to university and read about it, and for many years she understood it only intellectually. Upon her return from Vietnam, Elizabeth experienced difficulty with institutionalized religion when she found priests unable to speak to her about the things she found disturbing. They were more interested in their parishoners' sex lives than with the issues of war and politics, she explains. Consequently, Elizabeth moved away from the church insofar as she no longer relies on the

church to interpret reality for her or to make decisions for her. She does find the Catholic mass and ritual spiritually satisfying, however.

Heidi refers to her religious training as a child as something she appreciates – she perceives herself as having benefited from her regular attendance at church with her family in her community and as having gained a strength which later enabled her to survive a disasterous marriage. When married, Heidi was forbidden by her husband to go to church or to have her children baptized in her church. He also forbade her to see her friends who attended church. This upset Heidi a great deal. Now that she has divorced her husband, Heidi takes great pleasure in her freedom to attend church again. Sally briefly "turned to religion" when her husband was killed, looking for answers about the meaning of life and death. She found the priests' answers very unsatisfactory, however, and decided she'd have to find her own answers. Denise discussed the power of priests over women in partial answer to the question, "What do you think of this saying: 'It's a man's world?'" She explains how in her mother's day, priests and ministers expected and advised women to be submissive to their husbands, encouraging them to put the welfare of their husbands and children first. It was the duty of women, they taught, to sacrifice themselves in order to please their husbands and make their marriages work. In Denise's words: "and if you ever went to them with a problem, you always had to be the one to submit, submit, submit to the male, and make it work." Based on her own experience, Denise has decided that the Catholic ideas regarding birth control and divorce are not valid, and she is not afraid to tell anyone, even a priest, she maintains.

5. Other professionals and policies:

When she was in the process of determining her legal rights prior to leaving her husband, Heidi dealt with two lawyers. The first (a female) was helpful insofar as she explained to Heidi her dower rights and assisted her in filing a caveat against her husband. She was unhelpful, however, in that she did not seem to understand the seriousness of Heidi's situation (i.e., that Heidi was being beaten and her life threatened) and advised her on different occasions to "stand up for yourself" and try marriage counselling. Heidi was referred by the first lawyer to a

divorce lawyer (male) who was much more helpful. He advised her about practical actions she could take – putting money in a separate bank account and finding a place to live – emphasizing she must think of herself and do what is best for her. With support from this lawyer Heidi left her husband and eventually got a divorce and was awarded half of the family properties. She benefited from the New Alberta Property Act of 1980 which recognized that she deserved half of the family property. About the law coming into effect prior to her divorce she states, "It was really good that the Property Act came when it came. I think it should have been done long ago."

That Joan experiences a hesitancy on the part of business people to "do business" with a woman (i.e., buy or sell commercial real estate from a female salesperson) was already discussed in the previous chapter. That she was ridiculed when she began her own tile installation business was also discussed. Further, Joan expects that bankers would hesitate to lend her money to start a business as a housing contractor. Thus, it is Joan's perception that she is allowed to be successful in the business world only to a degree – that barriers still exist which prevent women from entering a field dominated by males.

Denise spoke highly of former employees who were helpful to and respectful of her. However, she has experienced a particular kind of abuse as a secretary, from men in higher positions within the structural hierarchy of an institution who have treated her with disrespect or blamed her for their mistakes. She thinks it is common that secretaries (who are mostly women) are abused in this way (usually by men). Further, it is her experience from working 14 years as a secretary that whereas men will often not own up to their mistakes, women will. Denise has also experienced discrimination because of her age – being treated as "just an old lady" by a young male teacher. The assumption that being older also means one is incapable and therefore *should* retire was also experienced with difficulty by Beret, who experienced much stress after her retirement from teaching. (She told the story of another female teacher who had suffered a nervous breakdown upon her retirement, stating that she could understand why.)

Theresa is concerned with government policy which discriminates against women. Specifically, she is incensed that single mothers have been forced by the government to go off welfare and go out to work for a minimum wage to support their children, while the fathers are permitted to assume no responsibility (financial or emotional) for their children. Theresa is also concerned about women stuck in unhealthy marriages who cannot afford to raise their children on the low wages women make. Further, she is concerned about government policy which limits educational opportunities for women. Developing the potential of women is obviously not a government priority, she has learned. That attempting to change policy that is unfair to women can result in disaster for women, however, is evidenced from the experience of Marcela, who lost her job while attempting to change union policy concerning women and sexual harassment.

Social Norms and Generational Cohort

Social norms reflecting the values of a particular generation living as children or adults in particular historical moments (decades) were discussed by some of the women in relation to education, working outside of the home, marriage and child care. Awareness of social norms is evidenced as women describe what they *should* or *shouldn't* be or do, what was *expected*, what they were *supposed to* do or be, what *was done* or *wasn't done*, what *everyone was doing*, etc.

1. Education, Work and Marriage:

Beret and Denise discuss how, in their farming communities in the 1920s and 1930s, it was common that girls were given more education than boys, because boys were needed to work on the farms and would eventually inherit them. Both women received more education than their brothers (with the exception of one of Denise's six brothers who "hungered for education"). Further, both women spoke of their parents valuing education and encouraging them to get as much formal education as they could. Although social norms of the 1940s and 1950s decreed that married women remain at home, both Denise and Beret were exempted from this expectation as a consequence of the war. Heidi, who lived in Germany in the 1940s and 1950s, was expected to work to earn a dowry for her future marriage. It was customary for girls to buy their furniture and linens before

they were married, she explains, because wedding gifts were only small and inexpensive items.

In the 1950s and 1960s, when education was more widely available to everyone, the factors influencing how much education the participants received appears to largely reflect their family's values and specific economic situation rather than a social norm. Christine's parents' attitude was that she didn't need an education because she would only get married. The assumption that there was no need for a woman to have an education seems also to have been made by Joan's and Madelaine's parents, since neither received encouragement to achieve at school. A different message – that education could be used to better one's positon in life – was received by Elizabeth, Mary and Marcela. In all cases, it was the mothers and not the fathers who encouraged their daughters to be educated. Elizabeth recalls how her mother helped her with her homework and seemed to vicariously experience her academic achievements. Mary was encouraged to go to university by her mother (who had not completed her education due to World War II and marriage) and also by her grandparents (whom whe described as upwardly mobile). Marcela recalls that even though she respected her father's creative mind and despised her mother's orientation to the business world, it was her mother who encouraged her to achieve at university and who now praises her successes. Differential messages from mothers and fathers were also received by Jean and Alice, whose fathers wanted them to be married and whose mothers encouraged them to work and be independent. Yet, underlying or along with the message to get an education, work or be independent there appears also to be a message to get married. As was just stated, although Jean and Alice's mothers encouraged work and independence, their fathers spoke of marriage. Further, Alice's mother assumed marriage was inevitable, and actually advised Alice to delay marriage for awhile and to go out into the world and do things *first* . The underlying messsage Mary received was to get an education so that she could find a "better" husband. Thus it appears that, directly or indirectly, women were encouraged to be married. Marriage was assumed to be the inevitable if not ideal state, and education was considered to be either not necessary at all, a means to independence from the

family, a means to delaying marriage or a means for making a "better" marriage. In fact, when marriage did not take place, as in the case of Alice and Jean, the women were judged (especially by their aunts) to be deviant or failures as women, reflecting the social norm that to be successful women must marry, and that their success in their careers is less important.

2. Childcare and Maternal Love

The idea that women *should* stay home and care for their children is common across all generations of women in this study. However, the rules governing the norm and the attitudes toward women who follow or break the rule seems to change over time. Beret and Denise both assumed in the 1940s that they would not work after they were married and had children – this *was not done*. Circumstances related to World War II exempted them from this "rule," as will be explained in the section, "Cultural/Political Factors."

The reasons given by women as to why they felt they *should* stay home with their children in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s reflects the attitude that the morally correct choice is for mothers to stay home. Madelaine stayed home with her children, even though she was frustrated and unhappy, because it was *supposed to be* her responsibility. Joan assumed full-time child care responsibilities, even though it made her unhappy and depressed, to please her husband, "for the good of the children" and because her friends were all doing it so it must be right. After first working to put her husband through school, Christine made a career of being "Superwoman" – clean house, clean kids, perfect hostess, etc. – because that was her only perceived alternative. Mary is staying home with her children today because it is she, the mother and wife, who is *expected* to sacrifice her career for the good of the family. Her refusal to do this would mean suffering much guilt, worse for her than the conflict she now suffers. That the *right thing to do* takes precedence over the woman's satisfaction for a considerable length of time at least is evidenced in the cases of Madelaine, Joan, Christine and Mary. Further, that the *right thing to do* takes precedence over reality is evidenced in the case of Denise, who even though she was forced to be a working mother, maintains that women who do not make a career of caring for

their children are neglecting them.

The idea that women *naturally* love children has been an issue for four women, three of whom have children and one of whom does not. Joan questions that she has the "maternal instinct" she thinks she *should* have, because she prefers to work outside of her home. Madelaine feels inadequate because she does not feel the kind of love toward her children that she thinks she *should*. Sally questioned her love for her child as she struggled to win her respect, trust and cooperation, when she became a widow at age 18 and was suddenly forced to assume full responsibility for parenting. Alice experiences as a burden the expectation that she *should* like other people's children.

E. Cultural/Political Factors and Meaning

There seem to be broad factors from the cultural/political dimension which have affected the lives of the women interviewed in basic and significant ways. These broad factors provide a background against which social and individual factors must be perceived if we are to fully understand the women's experiences. They will be discussed under the following headings:

1. Geophysical Setting
2. Cultural Differences
3. Political/Economic Forces
4. Cultural/Political Ideology

Geophysical Setting

Living in a rural area was a significant factor in the childhood of six women in the study (Beret, Denise, Theresa, Madelaine, Jean and Sally), remains significant for three of these women in adulthood (Beret, Theresa and Madelaine) and was significant for Christine for several years during her adulthood. Beret describes how her parents decided to immigrate first from Sweden to Chicago and finally to rural Alberta, looking for a chance to start a new life in a country that offered freedom and opportunity. She feels lucky to have the freedom she experiences and the quality of life obtainable in a country with rich resources and low population. She values that she has worked on the land, learned that she is strong and capable of hard work and that country living provides

her with healthy food to eat and clean air to breath. She also values the privacy and peace she experiences walking through fields and woods on her farm, and the sense of cooperation and caring she has experienced since childhood in her surrounding rural community. Like Beret, Theresa too has worked on a farm, both as a child and as an adult, and has experienced herself as capable and strong. Today she values the peace and tranquility she experiences while walking by the lake on her farmland, and the luxury of sitting alone on a sandy beach for a few hours to collect her thoughts or calm a migraine headache. Similarly, Christine values the years she lived in the country, first on a commune and then in her own house. Like Beret and Theresa, she worked on the farm and learned that she was strong and able to look after herself. In her words:

> So it was really an experience of living off your skills and that really showed me that I could survive in this world. So I mean if I could do it there, I could do it anywhere.

Living in the country also taught Christine a faith in human nature that she has brought with her back to the city. She explains:

> It kind of gave me a faith in human nature and in mankind that things were going to continue, the world was not going to end tomorrow. I just learned that from being in touch with nature and seeing how it rejunvenates itself. We can do the same thing for ourselves.

Madelaine, who grew up in rural Northern Alberta, has returned to rural Northern life on a "hobby farm" after living fifteen years in the city. She has mixed feelings about her lifestyle. On one hand she values the beauty and peacefulness of the surrounding countryside, and the freedom she feels in Canada generally. On the other hand, she has felt lonely and isolated, experienced difficulty getting to know and be accepted by the people in her rural community, and perceives the community as generally closed to outsiders. This was also the experience of Jean, who grew up on a farm. She experienced farmlife as isolating, as reinforcing the timid, withdrawn personalities of her parents and siblings as well as herself, and as compounding the emotional insecurities she had developed. The feelings of insecurity and social alienation that Jean experienced had a severe impact on her as a child and remain with her today. She explains:

> I feel so clumsy. I feel so unskilled. I feel like the combination of the isolation of the farm and then the isolation of my teenage years which was self-imposed, totally self-imposed - like I feel, and I have always felt, that I can never catch up.....I'm always going to be straight off the farm, aged 12, the only kid in school who wears braided hair and doesn't have clothes like anybody else.

Denise, who also grew up on a farm, did not learn that she was capable from living on the farm, per se (her brothers did the farm work as did Madelaine's and Jean's), nor did she feel restricted or isolated. She witnessed how life on a farm with many children to care for restricted her mother's activities and choices. She was told directly by her mother that women should have choices about how many children to have and what to work at, that "You should maybe try to do something else" and "Go out and do better." This message, combined with her parents' valuing of education and belief in womens' right to equality, inspired Denise to leave the farm and establish a life for herself in the city, confident of her ability to make a place for herself in the world and to achieve whatever she put her mind to.

Cultural Differences

Being different from the dominant culture by virtue of ethnic background or recent immigration was a significant factor in the lives of five of the 13 women interviewed. Specifically, the consequences of being other than a member of the dominant culture were low status, lack of knowledge of language and rights, not being understood, being otherwise disadvantaged or experiencing cultural conflict.

1. Minority Group Status, Ethnicity and Tradition:

Being a member of an ethnic group with minority status, a child growing up in the southern United States who was a dark-eyed, dark-haired Hispanic instead of a blue-eyed, blonde Anglo, was a difficult experience for Mary. The Hispanic people were typically working class, lived on the wrong side of the tracks in the barrios and attended the Spanish-speaking Catholic church. Mary's family lived in the barrios but wanted to not remain poor and consciously strove for upward mobility. They set themselves apart from the Hispanics by joining the wealthy and WASP Presbyterian Church. Mary mixed with the Anglo kids at school because she was in the honor society, the band and other clubs. She recalls that she and the other Hispanic girls all aspired to the WASP world, wanted to speak without a Spanish accent and wanted to be blondes. She explains:

> They were cool, but I was just a meatball in high school. And a part of it was because of being ethnic. I wanted to be in that world so badly. And my parents probably made me want it in certain ways because they set themselves apart sometimes too, from the rest of the neighbors. They didn't socialize with anybody. They always made a big fuss over the gang at the other church. It was something that they subconsciously

wanted us to have.

How much of Mary's insecurity stems from her early experience of not being part of the desired, dominant group is hard to say. She is clear, however, that her fears about speaking out in classes at university were related to the inferiority feelings she developed as a child. She is also clear that in social situations today her feeling shy and lacking confidence relates to her childhood experiences.

Being a part of an extended family whose celebrations and rituals centered around their East European traditions had a significant impact on Marcela. Being the only female child in the family, she was expected to convene and perform at family gatherings (and at festivals in the ethnic community) – experiences which gave her confidence to achieve in the larger community. Like Mary's parents, Marcela's parents were striving for upward mobility. For Marcela's mother this involved attending to issues outside of the ethnic community, although Marcela realizes now that this does not mean that her mother dismisses the ethnic community and its virtures. Marcela's father does reject his ethnicity, however, pretending instead that he is "part of the Canadian, Anglo-Saxon ruling class." He has critically judged Marcela's decisions to change residence or change careers as her being a gypsy (which is unacceptable). Marcela, herself, values her ethnic heritage and recapturing it has become central to her life. Like so many other second-generation Canadians from East European countries, she has been actively involved in studying historical and contemporary aspects of East European culture, travelling to countries of her origin and becoming politically active in ethnic organizations at the local, national and international levels.

Sally's Metis heritage has undoubtedly had an impact on her life experiences, although she did not refer to this directly. Perhaps being from a small town where there is a high proportion of Metis, French and Cree Indians in the general population, she saw her heritage as unremarkable. It may have been that Sally did not talk about her ethnicity because she was not conscious of how it has affected her – that she sees the problems she has experienced as personal rather than as cultural or political. It may be, too, that Sally simply did not relate her experience as a Metis to the initial question, "What has it meant to you as a woman?" However, that Sally's father's being a trapper, and consequently being

away from home for long periods of time in the winter, affects her life today is evidenced in her discussion of her conflict with her mother. She describes how, as soon as her father leaves for his trapline, her mother comes to stay with her, frightened to be alone.

2. Immigration:

Being a new immigrant to Canada was significant to Heidi for a number of reasons. Most significant probably is the fact of her having no family in Canada to turn to for support when she was being abused by her husband. Further, she saw for herself no alternative but to stay in her marriage because she had no friends in Canada to turn to, and did not know about the welfare system. Thus, without family or friends and without knowledge of social services available to her, she was without choice. She describes her predicament:

> And I said, 'If there was a bridge that goes back home across the ocean, I would walk on that bridge and never come back, if he ever done that to me again.' I said, "I'm not a dog that you just can kick around whenever you feel like it.' But I knew I didn't have no choice. My parents, my sister and brother, they are in Germany; they couldn't help me. And I didn't have anybody to go to. And I never had heard of welfare so I didn't have anybody to go to. So where are you going to go with two little kids? I don't have no friends or no relatives. So I just had to take and take it and take it.

Being an immigrant and not knowing Canadian law was an added difficulty for Heidi in that it allowed her husband to convince her that he was entitled to throw her out of the house if she did not please him. Only after a lawyer advised her of her Dower Rights did Heidi understand that her husband did not have the kind of power he claimed was rightfully his. Not knowing the English language inhibited Heidi insofar as she initially was unable to explain her problems to English-speaking people. Further, when her husband was laid off from work and she was required to work to support the family, she had to take low-paying jobs in clothing factories. Not knowing the language and her rights also meant not being able to complain about working conditions. Heidi explains:

> And in Canada you had to work hard because you couldn't speak the language so you didn't have the right or the opportunity to complain. And you were glad of every penny that you got paid. So you had to work hard. I worked again on assembly line, like in a factory here in Toni Lynn, in GWG, in Reynolds. You got paid by the piece. And even if you worked as hard as you could, you hardly could make any money because it was so poorly paid.

We have already determined in the above sections how being the children of immigrants has affected Beret and Marcela in positive ways. Themselves being immigrants from the United States seems to have affected both Mary and Elizabeth in a conflicting way. Mary talks about feeling alienated from both the American and Canadian political scenes. She misses her family still in the United States and wishes they could be nearer, yet feels that Edmonton is now her home and she would not like to leave. Elizabeth found being a new Canadian difficult in that no one understood, at the time she emigrated, the depression she was experiencing as a result of her nursing experiences in the Vietnam War. Today she feels glad to be living apart from the American political scene but misses the familiarity of the American culture in which she grew up. She is disturbed by the anti-American feeling she perceives in many Canadians.

Political/Economic Forces

I. The Depression of the 1930s:

Two women, Beret and Denise, directly experienced the Depression as children on Alberta farms. For Beret, the experience was not particularly significant in that her family was not affected severely - her parents supplemented the farm income by taking on additional paid work, and there were only three children to be fed. Further, being frugal, not wasting anything and sharing with less fortunate people had always been a matter of course in Beret's family, so the Depression did not require a change of lifestyle. In contrast, Denise was more strongly affected. Schools were shut down and her family could not afford to send the children to town by bus or to buy the new, condensed books ordered by Premier Aberhart. Denise had to quit school and abandon her plans to become a nurse. However, while her brothers were expected to work to help support the large family, Denise and her sister were alternately sent to live with their grandmother for one or two years to receive schooling from the nuns at a French convent. She was 18 years old when the school finally re-opened, and she returned then to take grade nine and high school. Denise also remembers being a young teenager and "longing for new clothes instead of patches," and looking forward to a time when she "could have a nice paying job and be nicely dressed."

In this sense, she feels that the Depression gave her a determination to put herself in a position that would insure she would not be deprived again. However, it didn't make her "money-hungry," she explains. Rather it made her "stronger" and she learned to find happiness in personal relationships, to appreciate the value of being resourceful and to care about and share with those less fortunate than herself.

2. World War II:

World War II significantly affected the lives of five of the 13 participants - three directly and two indirectly. Heidi was the most directly affected because she was living at the time in German-occupied Czechoslovakia. Under the German government she recalls there was enough to eat, the schools were operating, everyone had work, and she was happy. In 1943 she finished grade eight at the local school and, being a top student, planned to attend high school in the city. However, the people who were to board her could not take her at the last minute because they were required to take in wounded soldiers instead. Heidi's academic training came to an abrupt halt. At the end of the war, the Czechoslovakian government took over and Heidi lived under marshall law for a year and a half. She and the people of her community were required to wear white armbands ("with a black 'N' for Nazi"), were forbidden to wear German clothing or to speak German, and were not allowed to buy food. Eventually they were taken to concentration camps prior to being expelled to Germany. At this point Heidi's family separated because they could not find accomodation for five people. Heidi began working, at age 17, in a butcher shop, and there she met two girlfriends from similar situations who became her life-long friends.

The impact of World War II on Denise was extremely negative and caused her great pain. Her husband, whom she loved deeply, joined the army and was killed at the end of the war. Denise was left a widow with a small son to raise. She never learned how or where exactly her husband was killed, as she explains:

> We really never got the whole truth of it because you get your war telegrams and your information and there's no way to get to the bottom of it. So you just kind of have to forget about what happened. It's the War Secrets Act.

Adjusting to her husband's death was a painful and difficult experience which meant to her a great personal loss and the end of her plans for the future. She

lived as a widow for ten years, assuming responsiblility as a single parent for both the financial and emotional support of her infant son. Consequently, her life outside of her home became restricted to achieving security and success in her work and she felt supported by men and resented by women.

World War II meant to Beret a chance to pursue her career as a teacher, which ordinarily was not granted to married women. The war resulted in a teacher shortage in her community and Beret was approached to fill the need. It was arranged that Beret's youngest daughter would be cared for by her husband or a neighbour. Thereby, with her husband's and the community's support, she resumed her teaching career. By the time the teacher shortage was no longer a problem, Beret acknowledged the importance to her of her career and found other reasons to continue teaching. Thus the immediate effect of war on Beret was a positive one.

Mary and Jean referred to the effect of World War II on their mothers' lives – effects which they experienced indirectly. Mary's mother left college to marry, pressured by the war to follow the man she loved to his army base. She was soon pregnant and in three years had three children. Mary states that her feelings and memories of her mother are vague. However, the effect on Mary of her mother's experience seems to have been twofold. On the negative side, Mary was subject in her early years to the tensions of a tired mother living a poor life in a crowded apartment, a situation directly related to the country being at war. On the positive side, she is grateful that her mother "steered" her to college and provided a model of a woman who always had her own income after her children were in school. Unfortunately, Mary also learned she must limit her choice of career to something "steady, safe and secure" like teaching, a career which gave her no satisfaction. Jean's mother was originally "saved by the war" in that it provided her with an opportunity to leave home and the unhappiness she experienced working on her family farm. She joined the army immediately and "split for the East." However, within six months she met Jean's father, married, immediately became pregnant and "was stuck back on the farm." Thus it seems that like Mary's mother, Jean's mother must have felt pressured by the war to marry

and begin a family despite economic hardships. Jean's early experience was similar to Mary's – child of a mother stressed by too many children, by poverty and by the insecurities brought by the war. Jean also felt the effects of a father being away at war and a mother left alone to care for the children and manage the farm. Emotional support and security was a luxury not available to Jean and her brothers under these circumstances.

3. The Vietnam War:

Elizabeth experienced the Vietnam War directly as a nurse who felt it her duty as an American to offer her professional services to the war effort and who looked forward to the challenge of nursing in Vietnam. Experiencing the horrors of war weakened her emotionally, however, and made her more vulnerable to stress. She is just now, in fact, ten years after her Vietnam experience, coming to terms with it. While the Vietnam War was a personally devastating experience for Elizabeth, it also politicized her. She began to understand that the people she saw dying had no power to make decisions about the war, and she witnessed that the people with power to make decisions did not care about the young soldier boys and innocent victims who were being killed. Back in the United States, depressed and confused, Elizabeth's usual source of strength and inspiration, the Catholic church, was not speaking to the problem of war. Consequently she turned to Eastern religion and meditation, classical music and the underground Anti-Vietnam War Movement as a means of coming to terms with her experience.

4. The Current Threat of Nuclear Disaster:

Three of the women interviewed talked about the current threat of nuclear war and how this affects them. Elizabeth explains that she feels powerless to have an impact on the world scene and experiences personal conflict as a result.

> I feel powerless, I think, in terms of the world scene. I think things are deteriorating. I feel powerless to make any difference in that deterioration. When I think about trying to spend my energy to make a change, I think I'll have to give all my energy to that. And I think I go through periods when I actually do that. ...And then I realize after a few months it's not making any difference. ...I think the multi-nationals are very, very strong. They will remain in power and what do you do with that? ...And then I think, 'Well, if everybody thinks that way, then we aren't going to have any improvement on the world scene.' But I read the statistics – most of the world is third world, most of the population is the third world countries, living at a very primitive level – that the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer. And the nuclear

> potential increases by billions of dollars every year, and is constantly being upgraded so we can kill more people faster. And the chemical warfare is developing to new heights of sophistication, not to mention biological warfare. It's insane! You know? It really is insane. And I don't feel capable of doing anything about it.

Elizabeth believes that people assume responsibility for raising their own consciousness about political reality. She discusses her own belief that the possibility of war relates to a mentality which values power and competition, the fact of men having control in ways that women generally do not. (Denise also believes that men are preoccupied with power to the point of willingly sacrificing human lives to achieve it. This is not the way women solve problems, she maintains. She stated, "If women ruled the world, there would be no war. They would find a way around it.")

Like Elizabeth, Jean too feels powerless about the world scene and her ability to have any impact on it. She states:

> I feel occasionally powerless in the face of man's inexorable progress towards destruction. I think that the human race is not long for this world and I don't know what to do about that. I guess you just live your life and hope for the best, basically.

Jean explains that her tendency typically is to remain uninvolved politically because she believes that as her opinion "filters through the system," it loses its effect. Thus, she consciously remains uninvolved in the polical system:

> I'm one of the many who feel that they don't have any political power and that there's nothing that they can really do to change either law or government or society or any of that big stuff, and consequently don't tend to go out and do it.

Instead Jean tries to live her life as an example to the people immediately around her, of a person who in her private and professional life can be kind and moral. (Similarly, Denise believes that although she doesn't have power in the public sense, she can by her own example affect people's lives.)

As is the case with Elizabeth and Jean, Mary's reaction to the current world scene – to "political events..., invasions, wars, disasters" is to feel powerless. She feels that she doesn't have the energy or the inclination to be politically active or to effect change on a level other than the personal. Further, she perceives herself as "a small cog" in a big machine that takes over, and that even political candidates (who "tend to be basically alike"), have little power to control events. Mary feels sad about feeling powerless and being inactive, however, attributing her lack of

involvement to her own inability fo feel in control of any aspect of her life.

Cultural/Political Ideology

Ideas about the nature of women and their place in society are related to particular philosophies and values about the social/ political order. Three different and in some ways conflicting ideologies appear to be represented in the discussions of the 13 women interviewed. How the women interpret these ideologies and their manifestations in society and how they are affected by them will be outlined under the following headings:

1. Patriarchal Ideology
2. Democratic Ideology
3. Feminist Ideology

Extensive quoting will be used to illustrate women's consciousness of an ideology, how they perceive an ideology to be manifest and what it means to them personally.

1. Patriarchal Ideology:

In answer to the question, "What do you think of this saying: 'It's a man's world'?" and in answer to various other questions as well, the thirteen women interviewed discussed their interpretation of and/or reaction to the idea of male power in the public sphere, the lack of recognition and valuing of women's contribution to society and their awareness of women being restricted in society and being assumed to be inferior. Six women, (Joan, Theresa, Jean, Marcela, Denise and Elizabeth) discussed the "fact" of men historically and/or currently having formal positions of public power and thus control of the decision-making process, almost exclusively. Marcela perceives the dominance of male power as an historical truth, signifying it as basic to the foundations of society.

> It really is the way things are. And this is simple, historical truth. Everybody knows that important decisions, international, national, political, economic and everything else, are decided by men and have been for approximately 4000 centuries, which means we live in a world where the foundations have been rather firmly established.

Theresa's response focuses on a consequence of men dominating positions of power – that the ideas and structures of society represent only a male perspective.

> Yeah, I think that's pretty accurate, all in all. Canada has never seen a woman prime minister. Courts or the laws are all set by men. There's been very little done about that. Judges – how many women judges do we have? An odd number but very few. Most companies are – the boss or the head person is a man. So like all of the thinking and all of the way things are structured, had to be the male point of view, because there are women in so few of those positions. How else can it be?

Jean makes a similar statement about men historically having had public power, economically, politically, etc. The degree to which male power permeates society and people's thinking was something she discovered on a Opportunities for Youth project working on non-sexist educational materials. She explains:

> And when I was working on that project I actually came to realize what sexist educational materials were. And that they weren't vile or horrible. Like nobody was trying to bend the minds of children. But I realized during that era how things that are just so innocuous looking do bend the minds of children. And bend the minds of adults. And it's not the single incident, it's the constant hammering that makes things stay the way they are. It's the television commercials – I mean for every television commercial that is a blatant, obvious example of sexism, there are hundreds that are subtle, not at all obvious examples of sexism. And it's the same with everything that we read, and everything that we have always taken for granted. It's the little things that add up, it's the little things that everybody does and says in their lives that add up, and it makes a difference. And you have to start thinking in a certain mode before you recognize those things and you say, 'Hey! Just a minute! Do you realize what you just said? And what I just said?' Even now I miss all kinds of stuff.

Sally and Mary speak not to the historical fact of official male dominance but to the injustice of the situation. Sally states:

> I don't think that's fair because it's not only a man that's got to live in it. Women do too. I don't think that's a fair saying at all because women have to go through just as much as men do, probably more.

The assumption that women's unique capacity for bearing children detracts from their ability to think, reason, and work, Sally thinks might be the basis of women's subordination to men. She wonders about men's motivation to maintain the status quo.

> But we are different in ways such as women bear children and men can't do that. But men can probably do everything else a woman can do and women can probably do everything a man can do. But because of that difference it seems that a lot of men figure that's all women are good for. I don't think we should be thought of in that way, because there are other jobs women can do just as well as men. I wonder if – it seems like men just don't want to understand the women's needs. Is it just because they're not interested, or is it because they're afraid we're going to get up there and be number one?

Like Sally, Mary sees an injustice being done to women insofar as society is structured such that males benefit and women experience conflict. Specifically,

she perceives that men are generally free of family and household responsibilities to take their *rightful* place in the public sphere, supported by their wives. Women, on the other hand, face having to choose between a career and a family since society is structured on the assumption that women will provide total care for their children and manage the private sphere. Thus, like Sally, Mary perceives the social subordination to be related to women's biological difference from men. She states:

> I think it's 80 percent true. Mainly because I think that women either are biologically forced to do something – they have to have children in the family – or they just decide never to have children. And so if they have career ambitions they have to negate a side of themselves to do it. ... I think that it's easy for men to go out and be successes if they have support at home, and it's harder for women. That's why I think it's 80 percent true. And it always will be unless there are incredible advances in day care, where you can have a baby and know that you're going to leave it with someone who's trained; that the child won't be stuck in a hallway with three other kids, with somebody watching TV all day. Unless that happens, and I don't see it happening for a while, women are just going to have to do it themselves or else go out and do it at the expense of their family lives or themselves.

Being forced to choose between a family and a career, or suffering the consequences of attempting both is one manifestation of a society structured according to patriarchal ideology. Another manifestation, perceived by Jean, is a restriction on choice (for both women and men) according to the dictates of sex-role ideology. Restrictions occur, Jean thinks, because *somebody* feels their position is threatened and doesn't trust that people will naturally select what they are capable of doing. She states:

> I want to have choices. I've always wanted to have choices. I wanted – even if I made mistakes, I wanted to choose my own mistakes. I didn't want to be told what to do by men or anyone else. And I wanted to be able to look at things to see whether I wanted to do them or not. So I have resisted, and I resist on behalf of all women, restrictions on what they can and can't do. I think women should be able to do anything they want to do. ... But everybody should have the right to choose. What I resent is the idea that women can only do these things and men can only do those things, and that they should either be incapable or unhappy doing any of the other things. That's crazy! ... I think that everybody should have the choice. Because what bothers me about restrictions is, if there are restrictions it's because somebody feels their position is threatened. It's because they don't believe that things are going to sort out in the most natural fashion. ... People are going to sort out, and so they shouldn't be told, "You can't become an ophthalmic surgeon because you're a woman." ... People are going to choose what they're good at and what they're happy doing and what they're successful doing.

In addition to commenting on the historical fact of male dominance and the

consequent restrictions on choice and opportunity for women, Jean rejects patriarchal ideology in its evaluation of women as subordinate to and less valuable than men. She believes that women do make valuable contributions to society, contributions upon which the men in power and the human race generally depend. She further believes that although women may not have formal power, they do have personal power which has enabled them to survive and be strong in the face of injustice. In her words:

> I have never thought that women have no place. I know damned well that the world wouldn't work without them, and that women, even in their most powerless circumstances which do and always have existed everywhere, that women have power anyway just because they have strength. They have always believed that they have a responsibility to the race, certain kinds of responsibility, and against great odds they manage to carry it out. Most of which – like the greatest responsibility has to do with nurturance of children and of men and of each other and of the world, and trying to see that the men pay attention to it, that the nurturance of all kinds doesn't get forgotten. And I think that though women may not have – they don't control the outer arena, they control the humming center. And if it didn't hum, basically, if the center didn't keep being in there going, the nucleus in the cell, there wouldn't be anything going on out there.

Three other women, Beret, Heidi, and Denise, responded in like manner to the saying, "It's a man's world," rejecting it's patriarchal assumption that what women do is not worth doing. Beret states:

> But I think that women are really, well, they've always contributed a lot and they're contributing more every generation, to every way in life: to the health and to the politics and world situations and situations in the communities. I think they've always been in there but they haven't been recognized.

Heidi voices her objections to the patriarchal assumption of men's superior worth and to her particular experience of its manifestations. While her experience has taught her that men and women are expected to assume different roles and learn different skills, she nevertheless believes that she worked as hard as her husband and that in addition she assumed responsibility for the care and nurturance of her family. Thus she concludes that women should be valued equally with men.

> Oh I don't think much of that. All the years that I am as a woman I work just as hard as my husband and I don't think so. There is too much that I can do. Like he says he is always the boss and he has to look after everything and he has to see that the kids get raised right. Well, I don't think so. That's a woman's job to raise the kids and look after the household. Because from when they were small as a baby, the man never wakes up and feeds the baby and change their diapers. The woman always has to do that. And I feel the woman is the backbone of the family. That's the way I felt. And my kids thought so too. My kids

> used to say, 'If it wasn't for you Mom, our family would have been long apart.' I don't think it's just a man's world. There is certain things that a man can do maybe better, like trades people. There is a lot of work that women are not able to do in trades. As a bricklayer a man is stronger than a woman, and so maybe in several other jobs that a man can do better, but there is certain jobs that a man can't do what a woman can do better. And nowadays, the women are catching up a lot to the men's jobs. I think any office job a woman can do just as good as a man.

Denise, too, perceives that women's contribution has tended to be overlooked and that the nurturing qualities that they have developed have not been valued. She is also aware of the restrictions on women's behavior that have a moral basis.

> They're beginning to recognize the contribution women are making to the world. ... But they'd better never belittle us because it would be a mighty poor world without us. ... See, that's from away back – men do this and a woman can't. That's archaic, because what a woman can't do in public, a man shouldn't either if he respects himself.

However, the major focus of Denise's response to the saying, "It's a man's world," was that times have changed – that whereas in her mother's time women were almost totally subordinated to men, they now are gaining freedoms, opportunities, and respect. Denise often heard her mother say, "It's a man's world," and saw this was true for her mother because she was restricted in her activities, was considered less capable that men of thinking, and was treated as a subordinate by male priests and doctors. Denise also recognized that having a large number of children, as the Catholic Church dictated, restricted her mother. However, Denise's mother taught her that she did have choices – that she could choose for herself how many children to have and what kind of job to work at. Having had greater choice than did her mother, Denise believes society to have changed for the better as regards women's opportunity in the public world. Where men still dominate she personally perceives their perspectives as biased and as not necessarily representative of a global truth. She explains:

> I don't think it's a man's world to that degree. Years and years ago they did the voting, they did the thinking. You weren't allowed to speak for yourself or anything. But not so today. I think it's everybody's world. Like I think a woman, like you know, who wants to do certain things and advance herself or do most anything, can accomplish it. You know, I really don't think it's a man's world at all. Oh they do a lot of writing and a lot of editorials and everything, and writing newspapers and everything. But I have read some of it that was very biased and you know, not the best of writing. It was their opinion. And then maybe turned around and read something by a woman that was just super and very, very sensible. I don't think it's a man's world to that degree.

Denise further sees changes for women in the home relating to men's increased

involvement in child-care, their consideration of women's feelings and respect for their needs.

> I don't think it's that way anymore with young couples. Young men are definitely doing at least 50/50 to the raising of the children, helping the young working wife. They're very considerate of them getting out. And their feelings are respected. They're treated as persons. They have needs to be fulfilled too. I think that has really changed greatly. It's not a man's world. I think they've come a long way. I really do! And so it should be!

Christine, Alice, and Madelaine disagree with the saying, "It's a man's world," in much the same way as Denise because they perceive increased opportunities for women and have not consciously experienced restrictions in their own lives. Christine explains her position:

> I'm in real estate right now. And it's great! It's equal! I have a woman manager, I have a woman assistant manager, I work with 25 other women and three men. And the women are the top producers, they're just top, top, top all the time. The guys are just scrambling to keep up. The people I work with are very strong individuals. ... It has just sort of made me realize that being a woman is no problem. It doesn't hold you back at all. There's just no room for that because it's so much up to the individual. Individuals can achieve whatever they want. It doesn't matter what your sex is, it's a matter of how hard you want to work.

Similarily, Alice experiences no barriers to her own success in the restaurant business. She does concede, however, that some women might experience barriers and that others may have been socialized not to take advantage of the opportunities that do exist. Further, Alice rejects the patriarchal assumption of male superiority, explaining that her female friends and business associates "are strong and have got their shit together" whereas the males "are falling apart."

Madelaine focuses on the changes in womens' rights she has witnessed and concludes, "the woman, to me, has a lot of rights, maybe as much as the man." However, she detects in men a frustration "because they see they're losing sort of what they think they had control over ... they're losing the way they thought it was supposed to be...." As far as her own life goes, Madelaine is conscious that opportunites are available to her and that she is not confident enough to take advantage of them. This she sees as her personal failure, however, not as the result of never having been encouraged to achieve something for herself.

Whereas Madelaine focuses on why men may be threatened by the changes women are making, Denise speaks of the subtle forms of sexism that continue to

exist in the form of chauvinistic attitudes. She has noticed that although men may no longer state directly that they believe women to be inferior, their behaviour reveals this to be the case. She explains:

> It's only in the past 10 years that I have recognized male chauvanism. I never believed it before. I just thought people were using this and I never understood what it really meant. But after I became aware of it, I really did know that they were there. ... I've noticed that they really don't think that we can do things as well as they can. Or if you give an opinion, they won't even give you an answer. They can't be bothered. But the same opinion could be given by a man and he'd get into a discussion with him right away. But if it comes from a woman ... There's a lot of them like that. I didn't know that before. I didn't believe that men really thought that we were inferior to them. Now not all men, but there really are a lot of men who do think they are superior to women.

As Denise continues, she focuses on the change that has taken place in her own consciousness - that whereas at one time she was happily involved in her own life, did not notice chauvinistic behavior and assumed men thought women were capable and equal, she is now conscious of and recognizes male chauvinism around her.

> Which I didn't know really existed, because I was happy in my own life, busy with my own thing. And if anybody mentioned it, it didn't mean anything to me in the sense that I had never noticed it. I didn't believe that men thought we were inferior. Whereas today I have recognized that with some men, they won't come right out and say it, but they really do think that women are lesser than men. And they are out there. But before then I never realized, I thought they thought we were as capable as they were. I started noticing that through my work for 14 years at the school.

Sally's response to the saying "It's a man's world" is that it's "not fair." Like Denise, she recognizes the more subtle manifestations of patriarchal ideology. She is aware that women are subject to more criticism than men, that women are less respected, and that less attention is paid to what women say. She explains:

> ... women are usually put down more than men are. And that's bad, 'cause women are people too. Women and men should be treated like people, not somebody being better than somebody else. Like some men think they're better or think they can do things better. I feel maybe it's because women aren't given a chance. People don't listen to them enough, the way they listen to men. They may be treated the same but a lady can say the same thing and yet a man is going to be treated as respectable and listened to. ... You can see it all over the place.

Joan believes that the equality women have achieved is illusory and token, that change has not occured the way women would like to believe. She states:

> I think that a lot of the women that are in politics, high up in politics and high up in business – I think a lot of them are token. ... I think we're getting handed a crock of shit. I don't think that we're making the decisions that we like to think we are. They're just sort of patting us on the back and saying, 'You be nice girls and we'll let you be a manager of a bank in some little hick town that doesn't really mean a hill of beans anyway.' But I think if a woman tried to take over General Motors they might get excited about it. ... So yeah, I do think it's a man's world.

Elizabeth, who also perceives men to be still in power, believes there will be no change in the status quo because men don't want change and because women continue to support men. Following her explanation of feeling powerless to alter the deteriorating world scene she states:

> And this is what they created, this is what they want, this is what they need. I think it's insane! And I think they have control. I don't think it's going to change. I really don't. And part of the reason is I don't think enough women are out there. Like I think if all women, everywhere, refused to take care of these men who are promoting this self–destruction, it could make a difference. But I don't think they will. I think it's a man's world, yeah. Just open the newspapers. ... You hear on the radio, you hear the news as interpreted by men, talking about the fantastic thing that men are doing, in terms of insane ends. It's just all around you. They are in power you know.

2. Democratic Ideology:

. Although none of the 13 women interviewed actually mentioned democracy directly, the idea of social equality was alluded to by 10 of the 13 women interviewed. For example, in answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" Madelaine states,

> I value the freedom that we have in this country so far. We're very fortunate I think. Like that the woman has a lot of freedom here and we're very fortunate for it. I value that a lot. ... We're really a free people and there's a lot of things being done all the time to improve. If they can improve any situation for the woman, I think they're working on a lot of things.

Education was generally seen as the means by which social equality could be achieved. Beret and Denise spoke of how their parents encouraged their obtaining an education so that they could contribute to society to the best of their ability. Mary and Alice were encouraged by their mothers to gain an education so that they could achieve greater status or independence. Elizabeth, Jean, and Marcela saw going away to school and obtaining an education as the means by which they might achieve independence from their families and a place for themselves in society. Heidi made great sacrifices so that her children might have the advantages of an education. Joan spoke of wanting her daughter to be educated so that she could

achieve the professional status Joan herself had desired. Thus, the belief that an education is the means by which one can achieve social equality has been a positive motivating force for some women. However, for Joan, Christine, and Madelaine, who for various reasons (lack of encouragement and/or lack of opportunity) did not pursue an education, the democratic ideal of social equality reinforces their perception of themselves as somehow inadequate. They reason thus: I did not obtain an education, everyone has the same opportunity, therefore I am at fault. Joan refers to herself as "kind of basically lazy;" Christine refers to herself as "not very well disciplined;" and Madelaine thinks of herself "probably as a failure because I could have done a lot better in a lot of areas but I sort of sloughed off and I never had that determination." Only Theresa and Marcela remark that there is not an equal oportunity for all to be educated, and that there are real restrictions on individuals, one of those being related to gender, that prevent women from taking advantage of so-called equal opportunity.

An example of how the democratic ideology is manifest and reinforced is illustrated in the experience of Denise, Alice and Christine. Their experience of achieving equality in their careers reinforces the democratic notion that equal opportunity is available to those who are serious about their own work. However, Denise and Alice assume that because they have achieved success through their own effort, the ideal of social equality was at work, and further that everyone who desired to could achieve equally - that opportunity exists for all. Christine assumes that in her chosen career equal opportunity exists totally because that is all she has experienced thus far. The fact of Christine and Joan having worked at the same career for different lengths of time allows us to see how the equal opportunity ideal breaks down in reality. Christine, newly involved in selling real estate, is thrilled with her experience of working primarily with successful women, having positive role models and having an equal chance to be successful on the basis of her individual effort. About this experience she states, "And it's great! It's equal!" Joan has come to understand that equality only goes so far - that whereas women can be successful in residential real estate, they are restricted in commercial real estate. She explains:

> Like I sell mainly residential real estate and with that there's no difference if you're a man or woman. ... But I find in commercial real estate it's very hard to have men believe you. ... I want to get into commercial real estate but it's really hard to have someone believe you can spend $3,000,000 and do it succesfully. I find that any of the big deals tend to go to the men. I think they feel more comfortable with them or something.

Thus, although the initial experience of working in the real estate business may be that one has equal opportunity in a democratic sense, in actuality a hierarchy is in existence, operating on the patriarchal ideal that the most prestigious and powerful positions go to men. Thus, like the old adage, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," it may also be true that drawing conclusions about social equality on the basis of a little experience is also dangerous.

3. Feminist Ideology:

In response to the question, "What do you think of the Women's Movement?," and in answer to other questions as well, the 13 women discussed their interpretations of feminist ideology. Eleven of the women believe that the Women's Movement supports women's achieving equality and that it had generally influenced society and/or themselves in a positive way. One woman, Madelaine, mostly experiences conflict in relation to feminist ideals; and one woman, Alice, is largely confused about feminist ideals, regards the Women's Movement as an embarassment and perceives women who are actively involved in the Movement as simply on a bandwagon.

With regard to the 11 women who believed the Women's Movement to have had a positive effect on their lives and the lives of other women, eight of these women (Elizabeth, Joan, Jean, Theresa, Denise, Christine, Marcela, and Mary) valued the Women's Movement for raising women's consciousness (themselves included) in various ways. Elizabeth explains how the Women's Movement has changed her ideas about women's position in society, their right to opportunities which provide for growth and self-esteem, and their right to freedom from oppression. She states:

> But you know, when you talk about the Women's Movement, I think that the most exciting thing about it for me is getting to and understanding significant feelings I haven't faced before. Meanings that I never recognized. The whole thing of oppression of women - it took me a long time to recognize that. I just took it for granted that, 'That's the way life is.' I never said, 'That's wrong! It is diminishing. It is preventing growth. It is preventing self-esteem. It's preventing freedom. It's

> preventing everything.' I just took it for granted, 'That's real. That's life. That's reality.'

Similarily, Joan perceives that the Women's Movement has made women more aware that they deserve to be treated equally, and that it has opened up more opportunities for women. She states:

> I think liberation has made women more aware of what we didn't have before – that we didn't have equal pay and that we didn't have equal rights. And I think it's made us think more along those lines, that dammit, we should be getting it. ... I think we should have equal opportunity too. Like I'm glad to see women getting into West Point. Not that I would ever want to do it, but if you want to do it, fine, do it.

The Women's Movement made Christine aware that there were more options for women than she had learned to believe was possible as a child. This new awareness made her unhappiness with her life–style legitimate and at the same time made her excited about other possibilities. She explains:

> It's like I never even started thinking that much until about 10 years ago when the Women's Movement started here in Edmonton. And it pointed out that women were doing all kinds of different things, that I never even thought of, that women could do. And it really stimulated me. Then I started to be very unhappy.

As with Christine, the Women's Movement also made Denise aware that her needs were important. She understands now that women who lose touch with their own needs because they put everyone else's needs first lose their identity.

> The Women's Movement has affected me in the sense that I have taken a broader look at myself – that my needs are important – whereas I just used to forget about what I needed. ... It has affected me in the sense that I speak out now and give my opinion and say, 'I need this or need that', and that's necessary for me to function and develop and not become, you know, a lost soul. ... You can lose your identity.

In addition, Denise discussed the Women's Movement in relation to women now having the opportunity to realize their potential and gaining equality in the public world of business, politics and paid work, and in marriage too. She states:

> I think it's very, very good. I think it's excellent. ... I think it's just super myself, in the sense that they are people. And they can hold responsible positions. They can make decisions. And really, some of them have wonderful minds that have never been given a chance to be expressed. It's just terrific! Really terrific! ... We're looking for equality in salary. And it goes right down to if you want to drive a truck, you drive a truck. ... I think that they've come a long ways, and I think it's a good thing. I don't think that any woman should take abuse from anyone, even in a marriage.

Ideology from the Women's Movement raised Marcela's consciousness about the possibilities for her personal life in two respects: career choice and

relationships with women. Feminist ideology taught her that she could pursue an academic career through graduate school, instead of the "feminine" career of fashion and design which she found unsatisfying. Once she took the first step, she learned from experience that she need not experience academic success vicariously through her husband – she could be successful in her own right. As regards women, she learned it was possible to have intimate, deep and trusting friendships with women instead of feeling in competition with them for men. Elizabeth, too, has been encouraged by feminist ideology to value, understand, and feel close to women. She explains:

> Being a woman today also means I think, and this is very important to me, that I can be closer to people I value. And those are women. And that I can understand what they are talking about better than men can. Because what they are talking about means more to me.

Mary also identified a change in her relationships with women from competitive and superficial to serious and supportive as a result of the Woman's Movement. Rather than being "on the meat market – out on the hustle, when it seemed so important to get a man," she now feels noncompetitive around women and not threatened by their beauty, personality or money, the way she used to be. (She did admit, however, to being threatened by publically successful women, as did Joan.) Further, Mary discovered that feminist literature (her introduction to it being Greer's *The Female Eunuch*) described her experience in her marriage accurately, giving her the words with which to understand what was happening to her and which she sees now as "one of the contributing factors to the demise of our shaky marriage." Her reaction to the feminist literature she read was, "This is it! This is the gospel truth." Thus, as with Christine and Denise, feminist ideology made Mary's feelings of dissatisfaction appear legitimate to her and ultimately led to a change in her expectations for herself.

Jean feels that feminist ideology has addressed her experience as a single woman, given her the words with which to understand what has happened to her, legitimized her perceptions and made her feel less isolated. She explains:

> The Women's Movement just kind of crystallized a whole bunch of stuff that had been going on in my mind all my life. So that from thinking that I was merely an outcast because I didn't fit any of the regular molds, I at least began to have, to feel that I had company. That there were lots of other outcasts that didn't fit the molds, and that it was going to be okay.... And the Women's Movement kind of gave me a hand, because it sort of legitimized it. Otherwise, if I'd been born a generation ago, I'd have had a real hard time.

That the Women's Movement has made a difference to how they felt about themselves was also the experience of Christine and Elizabeth. Christine speaks about her sense of belonging to a movement that works to benefit all women, of the strength she derives from this sense of belonging and of the mutual support she experiences within the Movement. Elizabeth explains that reading feminist literature gives her a sense of peace because it speaks the truth to her, quite the opposite to her daily experience at work where she has to fight and struggle to be understood.

In addition to talking about how the Women's Movement affected them personally, seven women talked about how society in general was being or could be affected by feminist ideology. Theresa equated the current-day Women's Movement to the Suffrage Movement, stating, "I think that there's going to be some good done from it. I think it will go down in history...." Denise too, referred to the Suffrage Movement as being the beginning of the Women's Movement of today, which she identified as the American movement working for the ERA. Heidi perceives that the Women's Movement is responsible for changes which have improved women's position in society today, and that this change is reflected in the law. She explains:

> I think it's great! If we would have stayed like 100 years ago, then we wouldn't be as good off as we are today. I think that it was time that women stood up for themselves and spoke up and I admire everybody that does so. ...I think it was time that the women got a say in their lives. Yeah. It was really good that the Property Act came when it came. I think it should have been done long ago.

Whereas some women focused on the historical aspects of the Women's Movement, others focused on its potential to change the future of society. Jean spoke of how she supports the Women's Movement because she thinks it's "freeing a generation of children" who are aware they have more choices than did the last generation. Marcela and Elizabeth, too, referred to the Women's Movement as a vehicle for social change. Joan stressed that changes in society

reflecting feminist ideology will give men, as well as women, greater choice. In her words:

> I believe that when women are liberated, men are liberated too. Like I feel sorry for some of the men nowadays. They have to go out and provide, and generally, once they're in a job, they have to stay there because they can't afford to quit. ... Whereas, I think with Women's Lib, if women were free to pursue careers that they wanted to and make the money that they could, men would be freer to be able to stay home if they wanted to. Because there's a lot of men that would be happier than hell staying home, raising the family and the wives go out to work. But it's an unaccepted thing right now.

In spite of the overwhelming support for the Women's Movement and feminist ideology by 11 of the 13 women interviewed, some of these women had concerns about particular aspects of the Movement itself, it limitations and consequences. Denise voiced a concern about the tactics used by some women which she believes have hurt the Movement generally, "like burn the bra," an action she considers to have been "just a timewaster." Interestingly, Denise's interpretation of women burning their bras was that it was an attempt on their part to be just like men: "Men don't wear bras, so women were burning their bras." Even so, Denise understands that the radical element of the Women's Movement has a purpose. She explains her position:

> I think it's very, very good. I think it's excellent! Even though some of them are going a little – not like even you or I would consider necessary. You know, some of it's a little radical maybe, or something. But the person who is the radical is going to change something. Something they say or do will be retained, and put into another perspective or usefulness.

The idea of burning bras did not make sense to Joan either, who perceives this action to be extreme. The radical aspect of the Movement concerns her as well and although she is not clear about what she finds unacceptable, like Denise she also sees the purpose of radical action. Joan states:

> I wouldn't burn my bra. And I think that at the beginning women got too carried away with it. But maybe we had to, to get it into the forefront – like burning the bras and Gloria Steinem and all this kind of stuff. I think that they sort of got into it too hot and heavy but they probably had to, to bring it into the forefront.

Whereas Denise does not see marching with signs as radical, and explains that she, herself, would do this, Theresa sees this as a radical action she would not liked to be involved in. She begins her discussion of radical feminists by disagreeing with their tactics. As she continues, however, she begins to

understand why women might behave radically and what might be the effect of radical action.

> I guess I disagree with some of the radical kinds of things they do. I'm not sure they're all necessary. When it comes to the point of bra burning and the whole, I think radical – oh what do you call that when they go out on the streets and they march or do any of that kind of stuff? I think there's probably other ways of fighting it. I think all that does is probably – well there's probably a little bit of a benefit to it because maybe it makes somebody stop and take notice. ... I think that just by having the publicity and having been heard, like people are stopping and listening, I think more, to the Women's Movement. I think it's almost like any strike, and I don't care if it's men or women or who. Like for some reason nobody stops to take notice unless somebody gets a little radical sometimes. ... I wouldn't like to be involved in it, but I'm not saying it's all wrong or all foolish. Like I can see some merit to it. ... Like if you try and everything else fails, you might as well try something radical.

Jean describes the radical element of the movement as "necessary to get it started" and as stimulating people like herself, who tend not to be politically active, to think about issues. She explains:

> I personally would never have chosen to have done or said a lot of things that people did or said. But in the overview of the movement itself, they were necessary because they got it going. And they caused people like me, who just accepted all kinds of stuff all their lives, to think about things. I mean to think about semantics, to think about things they'd always taken for granted because everybody else took them for granted. And that's important.

Beret has difficulty with what she terms "extremists" in the Women's Movement whom she believes to reject men and make the Movement look bad – "put the rest of them in a bad light." She has the impression that some feminists think "all the jobs could be manned by women pretty well, and we really could get along pretty well just without the men," an attitude she does not respect. The anti-male element bothers Marcela as well. Her concern arises not from impressions gleaned in the media but from first-hand experience.

> A lot of the stuff that bothers me the most has to do with the way they talk to, treat and speak about men in their own lives. Which invalidates their commitment in my mind. And so I think I still have a certain reserve with certain kinds of feminists, although I encourage it totally, even in its worst moments.

Another concern, voiced by Denise, is that women may, in their hurry to gain new rights for themselves, forget about the needs of children. Although she herself as a widow and single parent was required to work out of the home, and although she understands the need for women to have separate identities, she still

believes that mothers staying home with their children is ideal. Denise's conflict appears to be between the patriarchal ideology she has internalized, her own reality and the feminist ideology she is still trying to come to terms with. For Mary, the conflict between career and responsibility is her reality, and represents the struggle between patriarchal and feminist ideology. She explains her conflict:

> I think I'm trying to find somewhat of a happy medium for myself within it, trying to balance the fact that I do have an urge to get out and do something, with the feeling that I must look after the home fires too. But at least, maybe because of the Feminist Movement, I'm even asking that, whereas maybe 10 years ago I wouldn't even have asked that. I would have just assumed that I had to do that and I wouldn't be struggling to find an answer.

Confusion about feminist ideology, stemming from inaccurate media interpretation, from social and political backlash or from the nature of the ideology itself (i.e., that it is new and developing and incomplete) is evidenced in the discussions of several women. As was mentioned above, Denise had interpreted bra burning as the action of women who wanted to be like men rather than as women protesting society's perception of them as sex objects. Her dismissal of this political action seems to reflect her discomfort with the notion that women must be like men to be equal. Concern that women are not valued as women, i.e., in their difference from men, or that being equal might mean being like men is the basis of Sally's and Madelaine's concern with the Women's Movement as well. Sally's concern centers around the fact of women's uniqueness as bearers of children and the necessity of understanding that this fact should not be overlooked, nor should it be used to determine what else women can or can't do. Madelaine experienced conflict more than anything else in relation to feminist ideology. She wonders if gaining equality might backfire on women in that they will be forced to participate equally in male activities such as fighting in wars. Madelaine's conflict with feminist ideology is more personal than this, however. While applauding individual freedom and rights for women and the social changes she has witnessed over her lifetime, she feels a compromise must be made with men – that they need to have a special place, feel important, be head of the household and be encouraged to accept this responsibility. It appears that to live peacefully in her own marriage, it is necessary for Madelaine to believe that feminist ideology must

take second place to patriarchal ideology – that women can be free and independent only if this does not threaten men. Madelaine's conflict with feminist ideology appears to reflect the conflict she experiences in her own marriage.

Alice, who dismisses the Women's Movement almost entirely, demonstrates a great misunderstanding of feminist ideology. She strongly objects to women being patronized and attributes this attitude to feminist rather than patriarchal ideology. Consider the following statement:

> I wouldn't say that I don't respect the Women's Movement as such, but I think that what I don't respect is a lot of women going into a movement like that and pointing out women who have done so well, *for a woman.*

Alice's assumption that women are in the Women's Movement "just to be in a movement" and that only a woman with position (she gives the example of a 74 year old woman who is a member of the U.S. Congress) could understand inequality and thereby gain her respect, reflects patriarchal ideology. Women, unless they have achieved public status, are not respected. Further, Alice's own adoption of indirect, manipulative, "feminine wiles" to influence others and her discomfort with direct action explains her embarassment with active feminists, an attitude evidenced in the following:

> I'm just thinking in terms of the more vocal things that I heard in the early days, you know, in the ban-the-bra days and so on. There were so many people who were very vocal and saying a lot. And I couldn't hold any respect for them.... And lots of times I get the feeling like I, or I did get the feeling, although I haven't really thought about it much lately, 'Why don't they just shut up! Because we women are losing respect.' You know. There's no control over what can be said and what can be quoted. And I'm not saying specifically that I have no respect, I'm just, I don't know.

Women who are actively involved in the Women's Movement have concerns which arise from their experience. Marcela is upset by the divisions within the Movement based on ideological conflict, and the tendency of some feminists to be "unnecessarily critical of women's personal lives." She judges this behavior to be "in lots of ways bankrupt and decrepit and stultifying to the Movement." Further, she explains the consequences to herself thus: "I am personally hurt by that and often impeded in my own actions." For Elizabeth, one of the conflicts she experiences in her involvement with the Women's Movement is internal: how much time and energy can she give to feminist action without

destroying her health in the process? Another conflict is theortical: how much can the Women's Movement force change on a society which is threatened by this change, is actively resisting it and fighting back? A third conflict concerns the social and political backlash women are experiencing as a result of their attempts to achieve equality. Elizabeth is concerned that violence against women is increasing as part of this backlash. (Theresa, who is not actively involved in the Women's Movement except on an individual basis, similarly perceives and is upset by men's disrespect for and sexual harassment of women. She believes this to be the result of men being threatened by women's new status and consequently more hostile to individual women.) Elizabeth's and Marcela's concerns do not detract from their belief in feminist ideology, however. Elizabeth concludes:

> But I have no reservations about what the Women's Movement is doing.... So I'm going to stay with it. I will promote it and support it and participate as much as I can.

The change that must take place in women's lives and in society in order that feminist ideology become manifest in reality, and the action necessary for such change to occur was discussed by nine of the participants. Denise advises all women to first respect themselves and take themselves seriously. Sally speaks of women living their lives on the assumption that they are equal to men, and acting in groups to insure their rights. She states:

> I think every woman should do what she believes in, what she thinks is right for herself. To me it's that women have to go out and do what's best for them. That's what I think people should do. Just because something's best for some doesn't mean it's best for everyone. It's up to the woman. Women's liberation means to me women are people just like men and should be treated as equals. Men are no better. That's the way I look at it. Like if a group of ladies are trying to stand up for women's rights, I don't see anything wrong with that, because I mean, after all, I guess women are usually put down more than men are. And that's bad, cause women are people too.

Theresa maintains that more women have to learn to assert themselves because they have been conditioned to think of themselves as subordinate to men. In her words:

> I think that women have to assert themselves, a whole lot better. They're probably not strong enough because of background and because of the way they've been brought up that probably the man is right, or he thinks better or he thinks more logically or whatever. I think we've been conditioned to that kind of thing.

Elizabeth is concerned that men's not caring about women's oppression is making

change difficult. She sees the necessity for "more and more women (to) start valuing themselves" as a precursor for change. Whereas Denise, Sally, Theresa and Elizabeth speak to the issue of personal change that individual women must undergo in order to assert themselves and effect social change, eight women spoke of specific social changes they perceive as necessary for women, based on their own experience. Theresa sees a need for changes in the way the medical profession perceives and treats women with gynecological problems. She would like to see a counselling service available to women (and their families), prior to and after they undergo hysterectomies. In conjunction with this, she sees a need for doctors to be better educated regarding women's health and treatment. Elizabeth sees a need for change in psychiatrists attitudes toward and treatment of women, and in the policies of the Catholic church which affect women. Heidi sees a need for more changes in the laws affecting women. Mary believes that until quality daycare is available to all children, women will be required to limit their choice of work and commitment to a career. Joan sees a need for the removal of barriers which continue to prevent women from equal participation in society. Sally and Theresa are aware that attitudes toward women need to be changed. Jean believes that changing sexist language in written materials, both for schools and the general public and, in addition, changing our spoken language, is necessary in order to change people's attitudes. Marcela speaks to the issue of political change, of "building political actions which ... involve and mobilize women in groups." She sees as a necessity, given that our society is patriarchal, the creation of small communities which are supportive and respectful of women. At the same time she sees the need to integrate feminist ideology and political action with other movements. In her own life, she is attempting to integrate feminism and socialism. She explains:

> Women should create a new world. Not they *should*. If you have any commitment to a version of social transformation, then you of course decide the route which you will take. And if you're a feminist and a socialist, you of course have certain solutions which are not the norm. ... Realistically speaking, the only place in which I think women and men can create a new world that is not dominated by men is in small groups. In small communities. And if you have a political commitment, you create a political community which has an ideology which favors that world view.

F. Summary

A critical analysis of the 13 case studies resulted in four broad categories, under which is outlined the dimensions of the women's lives which both affect and are affected by the meaning women give to their experience as women.

Individual Factors

Health

Nine of the 13 participants described how their own state of health affected their lives. Two of these women valued their good health because they were aging, two women were aware of how a current illness affected their general outlook, and six women described past and present problems involving female physiology and menstruation.

Physical Appearance

Physical appearance was an issue affecting perception and acceptance of self for six of the 13 participants. For three women being big or fat led to feelings of inadequacy and had a major negative effect on their self-concept. Two women experienced their appearance as unacceptable but considered this a minor problem. One of the women felt comfortable with her body and judged this feeling to be an asset.

Temperament

Six of the 13 participants described themselves as having "always been" of a particular nature which has affected how they experience their lives. Two women perceived themselves as having "timid, shy and withdrawn personalities;" two women perceived themselves as having always been "tomboys;" one woman described herself as having a "rebellious nature;" and one woman described herself as possibly having "schizophrenic tendencies."

Family Relationships

Relationships to Mothers

Nine of the 13 participants experienced both positive and negative or conflicting relationships with their mothers. Two women described their relationships as positive and two as negative.

Relationships to Fathers

Four of the 13 participants experienced their relationships with their fathers as having been strongly positive, two as intensely conflicted and two as negative. Two women spoke of their relationship to their father as having had much less impact than that to their mothers and two perceived their relationships as having had little or no impact. (One of the latter was a step-father).

Family Dynamics, Birth Order, Size and Composition

The nature of their parents relationships was described by 12 of 13 participants as having had a significant impact on their lives, the effect being positive or negative. Being an eldest daughter in a large family was a significant and negative factor for two woman and being a middle daughter in a large family was a significant and negative factor for three women. Being the eldest of three daughters on a farm was significant in a positive sense for one woman and being the only daughter of five children on a farm was significant in a negative sense for one woman.

Relationships to Relatives Other Than Mother or Father

Although all of the participants spoke of the effect on them of particular relatives, only six perceived their relationships with family members other than parents to have had a significant impact. Grandmothers and aunts were described as having had the greatest impact, although one woman spoke of both grandparents, one of her aunt and uncle and one of her extended family generally. Further, one woman spoke of an older female cousin as having been of great importance to her. Relationships with siblings were considered less important.

Social Factors

Family's Status in the Community

Nine participants experienced that the social and/or financial status or origin had a significant impact on their lives. Specifically, two women benefited from and two were hindered by their family's social status, and two women benefited from and five were hindered by their family's financial status.

Friends

Childhood friends (or all ages and both sexes) were a positive factor in the lives of five of the 13 participants and not belonging to a peer group was a negative factor for four women. Current friendships (primarily with women) were considered an important and positive factor in their lives by 12 women.

Professionals and Institutional Policies

Six of the 13 participants perceived certain teachers to have had a significant impact on their lives; six women reported that they were affected by doctors; four by therapists; four by nuns, priests and Catholic Church doctrine; one woman by lawyers; two by people they worked with and two by the policies of institutions. Policies were perceived as having had a negative effect and professionals as having had both positive and negative.

Social Norms and Generational Cohort

Ten of the 13 participants discussed how social norms and expectations of "the times" regarding education, work and marriage, affected them. Eight women discussed how social norms and expectations regarding childcare and maternal love had an impact on their lives.

Cultural/Political Factors

Geophysical Setting and Population Density

Living in a rural environment with low population density was a significant factor in the childhood of six women and in adulthood for four women.

Cultural Differences

Being a member of an ethnic group or culture with minority status has been a significant factor in the lives of three of the 13 participants. Being an immigrant has had a major effect in one woman's life and a minor effect in two women's lives.

Political/Economic Forces

The Depression of the 1930s affected one woman's life significantly and another woman's life hardly at all. World War II affected two women directly and two women indirectly. The Vietnam War had a profound, direct effect on one woman. Finally, the current threat of nuclear disaster was having an significant

effect on three women.

Social/Political Ideology

Three distinct ideologies (patriarchal, democratic and feminist) were either discussed directly or referred to indirectly by the participants. With regard to patriarchal ideology, nine women discussed the "fact" of male public power and/or the negative consequences for women. Four women rejected the idea that women are less valued than men. As to the progress that women have made under patriarchy, three women focused on what women have achieved and two women focused on the lack of real change and the difficulty of making changes. Ten women alluded to democratic ideology in relation to their perception of social equality in education and career opportunity or recognized that social equality was limited. As regards feminist ideology, 11 of the 13 participants support the idea of equality for women and feel they have personally benefited from these ideals. One woman experienced primarily conflict with regard to feminist ideals and one woman was largely negative toward and confused about the meaning of feminism.

VIII. Discussion

A. The Case Studies

The case studies are important, in and of themselves, because they demonstrate that there is a meaningful structure to the lives of the participants, which they alone can provide. The phenomenological method allows for this structure to emerge. Although the researcher directs the interview insofar as the theme is determined by the interview questions, the questions are open-ended and the content (meanings, experiences, connections) are provided by the women whose experience is being investigated. Open-ended questions also serve the purpose of providing for a check on internal validity. In other words, that any particular experience is truly important or meaningful is validated by the participant's answer to the various interview questions. For example, we know that Beret's experience of being physically big was truly distressing to her because she talks about it in relation to four different questions: ("What has it meant to you to be a woman?," "What do you regret or resent in your life?," "What do you dislike about yourself?," and "What do you value in yourself?"). Similarly, that Jean's fear of being rejected is central to her life, is validated in that she speaks about her fear in answer to several questions: ("What has it meant to you to be a woman?," "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?," "What do you dislike about yourself?," "What do you regret or resent in your life?," "What do you value about yourself?" and "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?") and in relation to many experiences (at school, at work and in relation to friends, relatives, co-workers, acquaintences).

The phenomenological method of research was particularly suited to this study because its focus is on the study of meaning, in this case the particular meaning that women give to being a woman. In the phenomenological tradition, any attempt by the researcher to impose a pre-conceived structure or interpretation on the woman's experiences must be recognized as possibly distorting it (van Kaam, 1966). Thus, it is essential for the researcher to not assume a particular interpretation of a woman's experience, but rather to ask for the woman's own interpretation. To this end the interview focused on what the women's experiences meant to *them* - how they felt

about them and how they made sense of them. The result is that we understand not just what it means and has meant to these women to be women, but we understand why this is so. Given who they are and what they have lived through, their present lives and the meanings they attribute to being a woman make sense. We become aware of a structure to their lives which they have created from the meanings they give to their experience. We understand from *inside* that structure – from each woman's point of view – why they feel, think and behave the way they do. For example, we understand why Heidi stayed for so long with her abusive husband, why Sally considered giving up her child for adoption, why Elizabeth attempted suicide, why Christine left her marriage, why Jean is afraid of being rejected and why Alice doesn't like to be associated with the Women's Movement. Further, we understand why Joan's first association to being a woman is that it's unfair, why Christine, Elizabeth, Sally and Heidi perceive their lives as women to have been a struggle, why Beret and Denise enjoy and feel satisfied being women, why Theresa enjoys and finds it challenging to be a woman, why Madelaine feels confused, why Mary feels frustrated, why Marcela feels anxious, why Jean feels inadequate and why Alice thinks of herself as a person first, not as a woman. This level of understanding is essential for professionals working with women (especially psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses and social workers). That therapists generally have not had this understanding is widely documented in feminist literature (Al-Issa, 1980; Chesler, 1972; Ehrenreich & English, 1978; Miller, 1976; Smith & David, 1975).

Another advantage to using the phenomenological method of research is that it allows us to explore the particular meanings women give to their experience which on the surface may appear similar but upon closer examination are very different. For example, Joan and Denise both speak of valuing "security" in their lives. Joan values the security she feels from the money she makes at her job and which she painstakingly saves in her bank account, as a safeguard against the insecurity of poverty she experienced as a child. Denise, on the other hand, values the security of having a warm, comfortable home with a caring family (husband, children, grandchildren), something which she experienced as a child and has maintained in various forms and circumstances throughout her life. "Power" also meant different things to the participants. Two

women (Denise and Alice) primarily associated power with manipulation and destruction - something "awful," "not nice." Eight women (Elizabeth, Christine, Jean, Heidi, Sally, Beret, Madelaine, and Joan) perceived power as a positive force arising from their personal determination, competencies and ability to control their own lives and/or from their social position and status. Three women (Theresa, Mary, and Marcela) spoke of power as having both a positive and negative side, as having the potential for harm or good. How the women themselves experienced power also differed. Whereas 10 of the 13 women perceived themselves as having personal power (i.e., having control over their own lives), only three perceived themselves as having social or interpersonal power (i.e., able to affect the lives of others). In fact, seven women (Joan, Beret, Madelaine, Jean, Theresa, Marcela, and Denise) stated that they did not feel powerful or did not wish to feel powerful in the sense of having power *over* others. These results support the findings of Lips (1981) that women are more likely to experience power in a personal sense than in an interpersonal sense. Further, these results refute the stereotype of women as being powerful only in the sense that they can manipulate others. Again, the importance of exploring the particular meanings women give to the words they use is demonstrated.

Lerner (1976a) and Mitchell (1977) have advised researchers to study the lives of women in their complexity. That a phenomenological study of women's lives can result in an understanding of women's experience in its complexity is attested to by the women's answers to the questions, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?" and "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?" Results showed that all of the 13 participants had experienced themselves as both powerful and powerless. Further, the interviews clearly demonstrated that the women's feelings of being powerful or powerless relate to a specific aspect of themselves or to a specific event or situation. For example, Joan generally feels powerful in her career in real-estate in so far as she has gained status, financial security, and recognition from others, and has knowledge that buyers seek from her. At the same time she felt powerless in the face of her son's accident and consequent injuries. Beret feels powerful in the sense of having determination, drive and the willpower to surmount obstacles. She doesn't feel powerless, except when she is confronted with criticism

and can't defend herself. Theresa feels powerful because she is not afraid to fight for what she wants but feels powerless because she lacks a formal education and lives in a small Northern community where opportunities for continuing education are limited.

These results present a challenge to those personality theorists who categorize human behaviors into diametrically opposite and mutually exclusive traits. Believing that any particular trait *belongs to* the person, they do not examine the context of behavior. It was in keeping with this orientation that Erikson defined men as outer-directed and active, and women as inner-directed and passive. It is on this basis, too, that tests of masculinity/femininity place at opposite ends of the scale mutually exclusive personality traits such as aggressive and submissive, strong and weak, intellectual and emotional. It has been simply assumed that if one is intellectual, she or he can not also be emotional; if one is submissive, she or he can not also be aggressive; and if one is powerful, she or he can not also be powerless. Further, a woman who was thought to be submissive was believed to *own* this trait. It was not understood that she was *acting* submissively *within a particular context*. Sherif (1979a) suggests that this simplistic portrayal of human behaviour has gone unchallenged due to the current predominance of behaviorism in psychology. Behaviorism, she explains, insists that it is unscientific to study the human social environment except in terms of rewards and punishments. Jay (1981) demonstrates the inadequacy of perceiving women and men in dualistic terms using formal logic. Assuming women to be the opposite of men, or powerless to be the opposite of powerful, is as false as assuming A to be the opposite of B, according to Jay's way of thinking. All we really can say, she explains, is that not A is the opposite of A. In other words, the use of formal logic makes clear the fault in assuming that women are a psychological Other because they are not a social Subject. That the case studies demonstrate the complexity of women's lives also presents a challenge to deBeauvoir's thesis of women as psychological Other. Women's answers to the questions about being powerful and powerless directly contradict the idea that because women have little or no formal power in patriarchal society (their status is Other) they experience themselves simply as powerless (as Other). It is true that the women did experience themselves as powerless in specific situations and that they tended to feel powerful more in a personal sense than in a social sense. However, the research demonstrates

that the large majority felt personally powerful despite their awareness of having little or no public power. In fact, over half of the participants (8/13) experienced themselves as more powerful than powerless. The psychological experience of these women was obviously more than a reflection of their social status. Thus, deBeauvoir's concept of the female psyche is demonstrated to be simplistic.

The complexity of their lives became apparent to some of the women during the interview. Theresa stated: "I guess like all things, being a woman is probably a pretty complicated thing." Being a woman is a complicated experience for each woman because her various experiences as a woman have different meanings to her. The understanding that being a woman can mean many different things to any one woman is a major point arising from the interviews. This phenomenon will be discussed in detail in the section to follow. Being a woman is also complex in the sense that any one experience will have different meanings for different women because they are different people – they have different temperaments, different physiologies and different pasts and presents, having lived in different places at different times with different families under different circumstances. Thus, another major point arising from the interviews is that women are different, and there is no one tidy formula to account for why they attribute particular meaning to their experience as women. deBeauvoir's use of "woman" (as discussed in Chapter I) is thus demonstrated to be misleading. There is no single model of the female psyche. There are, however, meanings in common – meanings shared with other women. The meanings may be attributed to similar experiences but just as likely may be attributed to very different experiences. For example, both Denise and Christine value being mothers and appreciate their children. Denise came from a loving, caring home and felt valued by her parents (especially her father); Christine was abused in her home and only much later, after she left her marriage, came to appreciate herself and her children.

That the phenomenological method is subjective, i.e., relies on the perception and memory of the individual, is not seen to be a problem. Rather it is a strength, since it is the meaning of her life to the individual woman that is being investigated. It is evident from the case studies that the women interviewed, given the opportunity to speak for themselves, were able to articulate what it has meant to them to be women. In many

cases the women had not reflected previously on the interview questions. Alice, for example, in response to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" begins by stating: "Well that's a big question. I don't think I'd really thought about it until you mentioned it today." Similarly, Joan states: "Well I don't know. I've never really thought about being a woman." And yet, given time to think and discuss in an atmosphere of trust, all of the participants were able to speak to the question in relation to the past as well as the present, making connections to events and circumstances in their lives which they experienced as meaningful and important. The fact that this happened lends support to the notion (referred to in Chapters II and IV) that in a phenomenological study validity is in part determined by the interviewer's ability to create a safe and trusting environment and to encourage the participants to reflect on their experiences and what they mean to them.

It is believed that the creation of an atmosphere of trust was central to the women being able to speak as freely as they did. Interviewing each woman in a setting that she found comfortable was one key to establishing trust. Another was to preface the interview with a clear statement as to the purpose of the interview and the interviewer's belief that what women had to say about their lives was important and could be useful to others. The women's responses to questions about the interview itself verifies this. Alice comments on her openness with the interviewer, even though they were strangers, explaining her perceptions of the interviewer as genuinely interested in what she had to say.

> I didn't feel it difficult to talk to you because you were a stranger. No! Not at all! I hedge around a little bit when it comes to things that are personal and that start to hurt, but I was open enough to shed a tear or two, so it must have not been a very big barrier. I am not suspicious in any way of your motives or your own feelings, probably because I don't feel that I have to fit into any mold. I don't feel you looking for anything specific. I feel you as a pretty objective observer, no matter what your own personal views might be, in terms of people, in terms of women, in terms of movements, or health food or anything, you know.

Mary similarly experienced the interviewer as not expecting her to be other than who she is.

> I didn't feel that I had to play it a certain way for you, that I could, you know, just be myself; that I wouldn't have to try to come off in any way to impress you.

That the personality and behavior of the interviewer are important in determining how

comfortable the women were to talk about themselves was also discussed by some of the women. Mary described how she might have felt inhibited with another interviewer.

> I was amazed at how freely I always did speak to counselling people when I was talking about myself. But a lot had to do with your personality too. I think if you were someone like Leslie I wouldn't be able to talk as easily. She strikes me – I mean she's really great, I'm not putting her down, but to me she's out there, highly successful. I guess it's just her personality is very strong. She makes me feel like not opening my mouth because obviously, what am I going to say to someone like her? I find the personality of the other person would be important.

Joan, too, described how the interviewer's personality affected her ability to speak openly about herself. She explains how previous contact with the interviewer had already established for her a sense of comfort about doing the interview.

> I've always felt comfortable with you, like in that class, and I've always felt that I could talk to you. Someone else, I don't know if I would have felt as comfortable. Like I've never had the situation happen but I don't think I would have felt as comfortable. But I've always liked you and I've always felt comfortable with you and that I could say things to you. Like I say, I don't know. It would depend how the other person and I hit it off to begin with. Because with some people I am very open and other people I won't be quite as open. But I've always been very open with you. Like you've got – I don't know what it is, your personality or whatever – you give me the feeling that I can talk to you.

Madelaine, who was so nervous at the beginning of the interview that she requested the interviewer turn off the tape recorder so she could calm herself, discussed how the interviewer being friendly and caring helped her to relax and to trust that she could speak openly.

> At first I was a little shy, I think because I knew I'd be talking about personal things. And then I said, 'Well, what the heck! I have nothing to hide about how I feel, or my feelings on this.' But it's made it easier because of your friendliness and you sort of broke that barrier I think. I don't know if I would have done it otherwise. You know, that, I think, helped me. I trusted you, for sure. I got the feeling that you cared and everything was going to be alright.

Perhaps Elizabeth's description of the interviewer as non-judgmental and therefore not a threat to her self-esteem is central to the establishment of trust in and comfort with the interviewer. Elizabeth stated:

> Most people judge. You constantly feel that what you are saying about yourself is going to be judged. And I know you well enough to know that you don't do that. That's not typical of people, you know. There's no way that I felt that my self-esteem, for example, has been affected by this interview. Whereas if I felt I was being judged, I would be setting myself up for a blow to my self-esteem. And probably, as a result, not be able to talk very freely, about my inadequacies, or lack of firm conclusions about a lot of things.

Answers to the question, "Would it have made any difference to you if you had been interviewed by a man?" demonstrate that the gender of the interviewer is an issue for more than half of the women interviewed. Seven of the thirteen women interviewed stated that the interviewer being female was an important issue to them, four stated that it was not, and two qualified their answers. The reasons given by the seven women for preferring a female interviewer were as follows:

1. Four women would have felt uncomfortable speaking to a male interviewer about particular topics.

> Beret states:
> Yes, if you'd have been a man I don't think I would have felt as free to say maybe some of the things. Then I don't think I would have been as comfortable. I would have thought maybe twice about some things that we might have talked about – some things that I thought maybe they wouldn't be interested in because I don't think it would have meant anything much to them. And I would be really embarrassed about crying because I just am that emotional and that's just me. I would really have been embarrassed.
>
> Theresa states:
> The part of where we talked about my medical history. I guess I would have hesitated about being as open about it as I was with you, not because I would be afraid to say it to a man but I guess I wouldn't feel as comfortable. And if you don't feel comfortable there's some things you don't say.
>
> Marcela states:
> I wouldn't have talked about power as easily as I did. I wouldn't have talked about it. When the interview began, I was trying to let as many thoughts go through my mind as I could without restricting them, and I wouldn't have done that if you were a man. I would have felt obligated to be much more disciplined, rational.
>
> Sally states:
> Like I know I wouldn't feel too comfortable sitting and having an interview with a guy. I probably wouldn't say all the things I've said to you. No, I wouldn't.

2. Two women would have been afraid of being judged by a male interviewer, would be afraid a man could not understand them and/or would have questioned his motivations.

> Sally states:
> If you were a guy interviewing me, for sure I'd probably be nervous and wouldn't know what to say. Because of a man looking at me I'd be thinking that he'd be thinking, 'Well, you're only a woman.' I think it probably would make a difference to me. I would feel that he'd make some, or think something in his head. Well, it's just the idea that he'd be thinking that I was a lady I guess. A lady's feelings are deeper than a man's. Like when a man and a lady break up, it's easier for a man to forget about it because, well, it will take a lady longer because she thinks differently and her feelings would be a deeper feeling than a guy's would. So therefore it could take her a longer time to forget the

situation. Whereas a guy, like it just wouldn't bother him.

Joan states:

> I couldn't tell a man. I don't know why. Maybe I would get the feeling that he was sort of putting me down or looking down on me. But I think, like with a woman I get the feeling that you may not have totally agreed with what I said, but you understand it, that you can understand how I might feel about it. Whereas a man, I don't think they'd understand at all. Because most women – at least I feel put down about certain things and I don't think a man would understand how I would feel put down. Because I don't think men feel put down about things I feel put down about. Like they would not understand how I feel put down about my husband putting me down. Whereas I think you – you may not agree with me, but you can understand it. And I think women can understand that sort of thing. Whereas I don't think a man could. And besides, I'd wonder why the hell he was writing this book anyway.

3. Two women described how previous negative experiences with male psychiatrists would have made them reticent to talk to a male interviewer.

> Mary states:
> I just don't think I would let a man get that close to me. Not somebody that I didn't know. The one time I was talked to by a male psychiatrist was at University, and he utterly devastated me. He was a hideous person; he was really hideous and maybe that's why I have this reticence. My one contact with a male in this kind of context was really bad! I just don't think I would have been as relaxed.

> Elizabeth states:
> Hmmm. For sure! I would immediately feel like I was being exploited. For sure! Immediately! And a lot of that I think goes back to my psychiatric involvement, mostly with male psychiatrists. Because I recognize now the degree of exploitation that I suffered from male psychiatrists. I feel like I would be setting myself up to be distorted into his little, whatever he needed to prove about me, kind of thing. I just won't put up with it. And I think too that there are exceptions – men that don't need to make a case about women. I'm not sure that I could relate to any of them, because I wouldn't give them the benefit of the doubt. The probability is that any male interviewing me would be exploiting me, from my experience, and I know that. So I wouldn't trust a male interviewer. No. Because I would expect that they would probably exploit me.

It is important to understand, too, why the four women who stated that being interviewed by a male would not have made any difference to them, felt the way they did. Heidi made clear prior to the interview that she had just finished telling her life story to a judge in front of a courtroom full of people. Telling one more person, male or female, would not affect her. Alice and Christine would have felt relaxed talking to a male interviewer whom they assumed would also be a psychologist and who would therefore understand them. Madelaine explained that she likes to think of men as friends and finds she can sometimes talk to men more easily than she can to women. Regarding

the two women who qualified their answers, Denise stated that she wouldn't change the content of her interview if the interviewer were male "whether it had been a bishop or whoever" because she is "quite confident in my way of thinking." She does explain, however, that she may have been "a little more forceful towards standing up for women" and "a little more on my guard" with a male interviewer. Jean stated, "It would depend on the man," explaining that the personality and skills of the interviewer were more important to her than gender.

The results of this brief investigation of participants' reactions to the gender of the interviewer supports Miller's (1976) thesis that male researchers may fail to elicit responses from female subjects. The results also lend support to the anthropological studies conducted by Shirley Ardener (1975b) and Okely (1975), indicating that women reveal different information to female investigators than they do to male investigators. Lofland's (1975) conclusion that male researchers will be limited in their access to woman's minds to the degree that they define each other as *other* and perceive themselves as psychologically segregated is supported by the explanations given by the seven women who stated they would not feel comfortable with a male interviewer because men wouldn't understand certain of their experiences or feelings.

Riegel (1978) is concerned that if psychologists use only an empirical research method to study human behavior, changes in behavior over time cannot be understood. Incorporating the notion of change into our understanding women's (and human) experience is important because in reality life is dynamic, not static; experience is a process, not a product. Use of the phenomenological method of research in this study enables us to understand that the women's experience of being a woman changes over time. For example, Joan explains that 10 years ago when she was working at home as a full-time mother of two small children, she was very unhappy and dissatisfied. Today, working full-time selling real estate, she feels free, independent and satisfied. Alice also experienced a significant change over time. In her late teens and twenties the decisions she made about going to university, teaching, travelling, etc. were never really important to her. She was always waiting for something to happen to her, (i.e., to fall in love and settle down with the right man). At age 31, she changed. She quit waiting and began to actively plan and pursue a goal (opening her own restaurant) which became central to her

life. Now that she has achieved her goal, she thinks her values may shift again, as she becomes more open to taking time away from her work for her personal life. She is not sure, however, whether this change will come in the near or distant future. Mary, too, talks about change – how in conjunction with leaving her husband, joining a women's book club and reading feminist books she came to value her friendships with women. Prior to that time when she was in college, she did not treat her women friends seriously she explains, because they were all on the "meat-market," competing for dates and focusing on the major task of "getting a man." Elizabeth talks about how gaining an understanding of the process of change is part of how she has changed. She has learned that being free of sterotypes – of trying to measure up to something fixed – enables her to see herself as "becoming" or "evolving." This sense of freedom is new to her, she explains, because she used to be concerned about fitting herself to a stereotyped ideal.

Perceiving life experiences as a dynamic process involving change presents the idea of research itself being part of a process which can have an affect on those being researched and have the potential of precipitating change. Critical theorists have challenged the empirical belief in the neutrality of scientific knowledge, explained that knowledge is power, and demanded that objects of research become true subjects by gaining access to knowledge (as has been discussed in Chapter II.) Feminists, too, have have taken the position that scientists have a responsibility to those being researched to share with them the benefits of the research process. It was in order to determine whether the participants experienced the interview as a benefit to themselves, that I concluded the interview with the question, "What are your feelings about this interview?" All of the 13 women answered positively. The reasons they gave were as follows:

1. Six women enjoyed the chance to talk about themselves, get their own thoughts in order, or to consider the particular research questions involved in the interview.

> Joan states:
> Well I probably thought about a few things that I never thought about before. I've enjoyed it. I was more worried about it than it's actually been. Because I've never really thought, like I said, about how I felt about being a woman. It's never entered my mind all that much. Like I don't concern myself with it. I'm too busy doing other things to do that. I hope you write a book because I would like to know sort of how I compare to other women. I guess I've never talked to other women about it. I've never thought about it.

Alice states:
I think it's just terrific, for me personally. As I said before, I just love the chance to think out loud. Because the more I talk to you and the more I think about these things – it seems like I always start off saying, 'I don't know,' and then the more I think about it the more I say. Things start going together a little bit better. So I'm gaining a lot from this in terms of getting some of my thoughts in order, or some of my thoughts straight.

Mary states:
Well, it's been really interesting. I haven't had a chance to really talk about myself for a long time and it feels good to say something. The fact that you should be interviewing me at this point in my life is difficult for me in some ways, in a lot of ways. And it's just good to have a chance to sort of organize myself and think about what I'm doing.

Christine states:
Well, it's always nice to talk about yourself. I feel pretty good.

Jean states:
Well, I was interested when you first asked when you called me. I was interested in it because I was interested in the question. And it's harder to ask yourself the questions than it is to have somebody else ask you the question. And I was hoping that having somebody else's questions would give me some new insights. And I really wanted a chance to work through this stuff in an extended situation. Even though a person works through this all the time with their friends, it's different. For one thing, your friends want to talk too. And for another thing, your friends tend to protect you. When you say things that are critical of yourself, they tend to deny them and stuff like that, and remind you of things that are less negative. I mean friends are great, but they have their limitations. And I don't know, I was sort of hopeful about it.

Marcela states:
Well I think it's a fine interview, but only because I know who you are. And I like talking about myself. It's not often you get to do it, so I enjoyed it.

2. Five women believed they learned something about themselves as a result of answering the interview questions.

Theresa states:
I think it's kind of interesting. I'm glad I agreed to it. I think I learned some things about myself that I probably never ever stopped to think about. I think there's a lot of things that I never ever stopped to think about, unless somebody really forces you against the wall and says, 'Hey, what do you think about that?'

Mary states:
And maybe there's some useful information that I should think about, coming out of it. I never really thought about the power thing. I never thought about it in those terms before – powerlessness.

Jean states:
I hoped that I would learn some things, and I'm always game to learn new stuff. And I think I did. I learned some things that kind of jibed with stuff that had been kind of coming up lately. And that gave me a new slant. A little more coherent. And I don't know in the end whether it'll change my life or whether I'll just go ahead and do whatever it was I was going to do. I tend to be fairly impulsive in the end. When it comes down to leaving, I just do it. I may think about it for a long time in advance, but in the end, I just choose. Because it's the only way you'll

ever do anything. But I might not. I mean I am now considering, and I wasn't considering the possibility of staying or coming back soon. And now I'm at least considering the possibility.

Denise states:
I've enjoyed it very much. Very, very much! It makes you think. It brings out new ideas, new thoughts, refreshes your mind. You come out with new thoughts and ideas.

Sally states:
I thought that it was a good interview but I felt like I haven't given you enough answers, that you're looking for. I think it's good and I think you are trying to show people's – women's views and women's feelings and that women are just as smart as men. And I have really enjoyed this interview with you because I think it has made me realize that I have to talk to my mother, and that guy.

3. Seven women felt pleased to be able to contribute something of their experience which might be useful to the research project or to others. (Two of these women and one of the five above who felt she had learned something about herself had some doubts about what they had to offer).

Alice states:
I found it really valuable. And I wouldn't be here if I didn't think it was important because I do also think that I have something to say. And I think that, I don't know anything about the other people that you've talked to, but I've got a pretty good idea that you are choosing at random yet selectively. You're looking for certain kinds of people to talk to. And so I feel good about that. When you first said, 'I'm going to ask you what it means to you to be a woman,' I didn't know exactly what I was going to say. But I thought to myself, 'I've got some things to say. I'm not sure what they are, but I'm going to have some things to say.' So I have taken it seriously. You know. And I've really enjoyed it.

Denise states:
And it gives you kind of a lift, you know. You don't feel like you're at the end of the line sort of thing, you know, that you have nothing worthwhile to say to someone. I've enjoyed it very much. Very, very much! And you have the feeling that – you, hope, too that some little thing you've said can help you in furthering what you want to do. That you can be a little of a part of it, no matter how small. I find it very rewarding if you can use three chapters of what I've said to further yourself – if it can help. It's a sharing of ourselves with another person. And that's very important. No doubt not all of it can be used, but at least some of it will.

Christine states:
I hope that it will give some insight to someone who may not have had the experiences that I've had. I sort of feel about my life that I have overcome a lot of obstacles. I'm still chugging along, sometimes good and sometimes bad, but mostly pretty positively. I feel okay about sharing that.

Heidi states:
Oh, I think it was good. Anything I can help to contribute for a university student, I will. Because my son went through it so I know how hard it is. For me it was hard at some points, but I have been through there many times and it was okay.

Madelaine states:

> Well, at first I didn't know if I'd be able to say anything, or I thought, 'What can I offer?' And then I thought ,'Well, if I can give my ideas, I'll give them.' Actually it's a privilege. I feel good about being able to talk about how I feel. It's a mixed feeling because I'm not as old as some and I'm older than some but I haven't done all that much in my life to be in many things I suppose. So I think 'Well, who am I?' And yet, I feel that it's nice, it's a privilege to be able to speak and say how I feel about this.
>
> Beret states:
> Well, it's different than what I had anticipated. I really didn't know what the topic was. But I don't know that I have contributed very much to it. I'm just happy to contribute to your project if it's any good, but it just seems like I'm not anybody special. And what can my ideas and my experiences contribute? They aren't very important.
>
> Elizabeth states:
> Good. Really good. We talked about process. Everything's a process, for me anyway. And I think that's life. We're in process. I'm telling you my perception of myself, in relation to your question. I know I can't give you the whole truth, you know, but I think you recognize that. The Women's Movement is very important in this evolution of consciousness. And a lot of these feminist writers are very educated women you know, very skillful about relating their experiences. And when I read something that makes me realize something that I never realized before – it's always been true, but all of a sudden – and you feel like your consciousness is expanding in terms of the whole society, of women. And I am sure that if the women you are interviewing read each other's experiences, or heard them, that it would click, with a lot of them. That, 'Yes, that's true for me, as well.' And maybe also understanding our differences.

That the effect of an intensive research interview can still be felt with the passage of time, and that the interview can precipitate a change of perception, attitude or behavior in the research subject is verified by the women's answers to a questionnaire (see Appendix C) sent out to them approximately eight months after the initial interview. Eleven of the 13 women returned the questionnaire.[15] All of these 11 reported that they had enjoyed the interview for the reasons given originally. Further, all reported a change in themselves which was varyingly viewed as subtle, as part of the process of change they already perceived themselves to be in, as specific, as general or as dramatic. Six women reported that the interview had only positive effects and five reported that the interview first precipitated some disturbing feelings, out of which came some positive resolutions.

As regards the six women who viewed the interview as having a positive effect, an experience common to these women was that the interview helped them to better understand themselves. Four of the six further explained how this increased

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[15]The two women who did not return the questionaire were contacted and they promised to return it. However, they did not. A mail strike occured during this time and may have been a factor in their failure to follow through with their promise.

understanding has led to a change in attitude, perception or behavior. They reported as follows:

> Denise:
> I felt satisfied and was glad I was able to help you reach your goal. For me it was a chance to think beyond the scope of a daily routine. I realized that we sometimes have a lot more potential than we give ourselves credit for.
>
> Jean:
> The interview focused my thinking on certain issues regarding my life that have been a recurring theme. This means to me that I am even more fixed in my ways than I thought. I was stimulated very much by the occasions. I had some great conversations with a couple of old friends soon after the time, but that wasn't new or particularly different. I wouldn't say there was no change – it was just too subtle to pick out. I felt at the time that things were already changing.
>
> Theresa:
> I learned something about myself that I was not aware of before: why I think and do things the way I have always done them. I now realize that my background has formed the kind of person I am. I got to know myself much better. The experience has made me a stronger person and will be of some help in future times. I feel that I have more confidence in myself and that I may decide to try some things that I wouldn't have tried before. The interview was handled in a tactful manner. I never once felt uncomfortable about any part of it.
>
> Mary:
> When I gave the interview I had a good feeling about it. It was a chance to take stock, get some things off my chest, organize my thoughts or feelings a bit, focus on what I was getting out of life and what I was putting into it. On reading the interview several months later, it was very interesting to see how my feelings had changed on certain things. This means to me I am always changing and must guard against feeling that things will never change or improve. I am much more aware of my ambivalences toward my children, husband, work and I accept this ambivalence as normal and part of growth. Perhaps I have gained the ability to accept myself more and certainly accept my family's changes. I think the interview helped me focus on my anger and depression and to act, for example, on my husband's procrastination with regard to his vasectomy. I think that this past year has been a time of real reflection and I think I know myself a bit more now than I did last year. Perhaps the interview started this process? I appreciated at the time the sense of unhurriedness on your part.
>
> Madelaine:
> I realized that there was a lot of areas in my life I had to work at – for example, accepting my past and believing I could overcome a lot of negative feelings or insecurities I had. I have let myself be a victim of negative ideas and I have let myself be trapped by them. Since the interview I have questioned myself, read a lot and worked out quite a few things. It made me separate what I could change or control, which I'm pleased about. It also made me take a good look at myself and my role. Now I feel I am more aware that I can do a lot for how I want our family life to be. And I've accepted "me" more. To be interviewed made me realize how important events in one's life are and how they effect us. I was surprised to be interviewed, felt it a privilege to be asked and that my ideas did count or might be of value to someone.

Beret's response to the questionnaire is reported in full because it demonstrates a dramatic change in consciousness, not just of herself but also of the devaluation of

women generally in society and of the results for women of being confined to narrow roles. Hence we witness the birth of a feminist consciousness in a woman of 69 years.

Beret:
After the interview I began to think about the tremendous role that women have played over the years. I feel that because women have quietly and ungrudgingly worked under difficulties raising families and making their homes comfortable, their contributions to society have been taken for granted. I now realize that each of these women, because of their varied situations and experiences, have in their minds vast stories of special knowledge and also stories of historical value. The male population especially needs to be made to recognize and give women credit for their true worth instead of taking their contribution for granted. Much of the artistic and cultural ability of some women has been and is untapped because of the tedious and demanding tasks of home-making.

Because I have always felt insignificant I haven't spoken of my feelings to others but I now feel that perhaps I have influenced some citizens as years went by. I feel better about myself and as I look at my friends and other women who are strangers I wonder what they could tell if they had the opportunity and also what hidden talents they have which were never exposed or developed because their role as a homemaker was too time-consuming and demanding. I think that all women, regardless of their station in life, should be held in greater esteem and respect. Their real value to society has been played down for generations due mostly to antiquated traditions. Women have been taught to be submissive and wait on men and have been led to believe that they are less intelligent than men.

The interview made me feel that the years of my life had been spent in a worthwhile manner and it lifted my spirits. When I feel depressed I recall the experience and feel better about myself personally. My opinion of all women in general has been raised and as I meet them and re-appraise them I wonder what potential is there that is being wasted. I would recommend to a friend that she do an interview because I think most women feel as I did and it would give them a better feeling about themselves and improve their outlook. They might even re-allot their time and make their lives more fruitful and enjoyable. Men need to be re-educated regarding their opinion of the role of women and wives. Many men regard wives, especially, as a property which is a means to an end. I'm not a radical but there should be a movement of some sort to better the situation.

With regard to the five women who experienced the after-effects of the interview as a mixture of disturbing feelings and positive resolutions, the common experience seemed to be that they had been reminded of painful experiences from the past and perhaps made judgments of themselves. Ultimately, however, this resulted in clearer perceptions and stronger resolutions to make changes. They reported as follows:

Sally:
In a lot of ways I felt so immature for letting so many things just happen to me when I should have stood up for "me," for my rights as a person. But now I feel I've come a long way. I've had to learn the hard way which has probably made me a better person today. But I wouldn't wish my life to any young girl, to be forced to face the world alone. I didn't have a chance to face the world slowly. It came all too fast. But I feel that's over, the worst part of my life, for now I feel I'm grown up to face anything. I've been trying

hard to stand up for my rights. Before I was afraid to let any person know what my life was like.

Christine:
For awhile afterwards I felt frightened that my past would keep bothering me as it had before. I had felt there were things I had talked about that were not really finished for me. However, I don't really want to deal with them anymore. I'd rather just get on with my life. I spent many years in therapy trying to learn how to accept the past. So I felt sad, ashamed and lonely for awhile after going over it all again. The interview also showed me that if I made it through the first 30 years of my life when I was not in control, then the next 30 will be fantastic because I am in control now. And that's an important realization – knowing that I have a choice. It was important to me that you have been trained in psychology. It made it easier for me to be open and honest, knowing that you had a good understanding of emotional difficulties and their cause and effect. I was honored to be chosen by you – that you would think my story would be interesting enough for your study.

Heidi:
It reminded me of a lot of things I had forgotten. It also brought out my strong feelings about the need to change to survive a bad marriage and to forget the past and look forward to a new and better future. The interview helped me to relieve my mind and you can also get some points out of it to pass on to others. Like you're supposed to help others and if you exchange experiences that could be helpful to others. I realize that the best thing for me was to get out and work and be with people. And if I hadn't done that I would be in the mental institution today. It got me out of the deep depression I was in because all of the people I worked with have been all so helpful to me, and I'm grateful to every one of them. I found a poem and I copied it down and carry it with me. "If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it." That's sort of my style, too. If you want something bad enough and you work at it, you will become it.

Marcela:
I have been in a quiet depression since I last saw you, but it has been fruitful, calming and even loving. I feel something new happening inside me. I began to study the more subtle means of male power, especially how it functions to divide women. This, and subsequent thoughts, have continued to swirl in my mind since our uplifting discussion about male authority in the academic community and the double standards I understood I had cultivated as a result of my family structure. I am, as a result, working on an article on subtle means of male power, especially in intimate relationships. I am also thinking about how sisterhood is threatened by intersecting institutions such as ethnicity, jealously, success, male peers, work/projects. I learned a few earth–shattering things about myself:

1. I am politically motivated by the principle that women should do anything in their power to create bonds that can't be broken and I make no room for human emotions like jealousy, insecurity, plain meanness.
2. I have felt guilty for men and especially women who are not as smart as I am or who, for right or wrong, have not achieved what I have achieved. Feeling guilty, I often pretend to be dumber than I am, less ambitious, less able or less confident than I really am.
3. I am too preoccupied with not hurting women I think are weak or unstable on the principle that they get hurt often enough, but too often I get hurt in the process and nobody believes it.
4. I am afraid to be successful because I know how lonely it is and how many enemies one makes.
5. I am very sure about what is right or best for me, for my work, for others even; and I act as though I am not so that people won't reject me.

Elizabeth:

It is almost impossible for me to isolate the effects of the interview from the rest of my experiences in 1980. It has been a profoundly moving, changing year for me. And exhausting! What I feel now is a kind of "cosmic weariness." I suppose this weariness relates to the interview in the sense that speaking in a historical, interpretive sense about myself deepened the commitment I feel to "pushing on." The interview seemed to make concrete my dedication to my own "truth" and this has not made my life easier. Specifically, I think the interview had the following effect:

1. I got a sense of my own values and my right to pursue them. And I feel more carefree about admitting them.
2. I felt very validated by the interview – like it was okay to be myself. Maybe it had the effect of making me angry when I see anyone invalidated.
3. I think I felt very fortunate to have been listened to. It's a luxury that I don't often experience, and maybe I've never experienced it before in quite the same depth. It seemed like I was the one benefitting and you were just left with a lot of words. I know I listen better at work. I've got a really concrete idea now of validative listening.
4. I think I've given more thought to the rest of my life. It was like a "summing up" and a letting go. And now what?
5. I've been able to understand a little better the effect Vietnam had on my life. It'll take many more years to integrate it. I used to feel that my experience was too distorted by my own sense of shock and detachment to be able to say anything meaningful. Now I see my experience of shock, etc., to be my real experience, important in itself. I suffered greatly and am not ashamed of that anymore.
6. I think, too, that I don't hesitate to act anymore. I go through a "suffering" period after I run up against something but after it's over the usual result is some sort of action. I care much less about the consequences. You do what you have to do.
7. I value my religious/theological/philosophical education much more. I see the emptiness in people, the shallowness, to be partially due to their lack of deeply-rooted values.
8. More than ever I value my consciousness as my greatest possession. I can't say my life has become less painful. But it matters less because I see what happens to people who try to avoid pain.

I suppose my experience can be summed up by saying I feel more "centered." The process was more important than what exactly I did realize. It opened my eyes to the stupidity of psychiatry I had been through – the constant evaluation and interference, as if the psychiatrists were so afraid of the truth inside me that they had to do everything possible to shut it up if possible or invalidate it if it came out.

The above reports by 11 women, of how the research interview affected them, lend support to radical thinkers (Bernard, 1973a; Giorgi, 1970; Lofland, 1975; Millman & Kanter, 1975; Riegel, 1978; Schroyer, 1970; Vaughter, 1976) who critique the assumption of empirical scientists that science is neutral and objective. Further, it demonstrates that it is possible to be ethically responsible to those being researched – that the researcher can gather information in such a way as to avoid perpetuating the experience, common to research subjects, that they have been "ripped off." Instead of hiding the true nature of the study from the subjects and using the information for the benefit of the researcher or an institution, it is possible to carry on research in the form of an open and honest interaction which allows for the subject to benefit from the

process. That the research questions may have a disturbing effect on the subjects must be recognized and care taken to insure there will be time to deal with strong reactions. That the researcher's personality, skills, professional status, and gender can make a difference to how comfortable the research subjects feel and how open they will be in answering questions (i.e., how rich the data will be) has been demonstrated.

B. The Meanings of Being a Woman

The Negative Meanings of Being a Woman

Experiencing the Female Body as a Burden

Eight women experienced their body as a burden for a number of reasons. Dysmenorrhea, or menstrual distress experienced in the form of premenstrual tension, mood swings, severe pain during menstruation, and/or migraine headaches was a problem for six women. Research on physiological and emotional changes related to the menstrual cycle is confusing and non-conclusive. Arguments persist as to whether or not women actually do experience menstrual or pre-menstrual tension, and whether the cause is physiological or psychological/social (Parlee, 1973). One of the continual errors made by researchers in this field is the "Woman Error" (also made by deBeauvoir) which searches for one answer - a common experience for all women. The Woman Error is manifest in research on dysmenorrhea when it is assummed that if one woman does not experience cyclical distress, then another woman's distress does not count. The empirical method of research, insofar as it relies on objective measuring techniques and averages results, is clearly at fault in this respect. Personal reporting, which inevitably provides different results than the objective tests, is considered to be unreliable. Another fault of current research on menstrual distress is the researchers' continued attempt to link menstrual distress with gender-role attributes (i.e., masculine and feminine traits), the assumption being that menstrual distress is a product of personality rather than physiology. Similarly, research which attempts to relate menstrual distress to neurotic and psychotic symptoms (depression, anxiety, schizophrenia) assumes that dysmenorrhea exists primarily in women's minds.

Three women reported that after continual difficulties with their female physiology, they underwent hysterectomies. That women continue to suffer from physiological dysfunctioning, the solution to which is most often surgical removal of the problem part, is indicative of the lower valuing of women compared to men, according to experts (Daly, 1978; Ehrenreich & English, 1978; Penfold, 1980; Rothman, 1979). Similarly, the lack of safe and effective birth control methods (which was considered a problem by three women) is related to the fact that males do not make female problems a priority in medical research and health care. The Canadian physician, Penfold (1980) states:

> Health care services by and large focus on needs defined by white, middle-class, mostly male, decision makers.... (Money alloted for treatment and research in traditional medicine) is a choice which reflects the priorities - and anxieties - of the health care planners and physicians responsible (4-5).

That women's physiological difficulties have typically been misunderstood and that women who report having difficulties have typically been blamed is well-documented in Ehrenreich and English (1978), who also explain the historical origins of attitudes towards female physiology. Rothman (1979) maintains that the female reproductive system is defined in medicine in terms of disease or abnormality, and calls for a redefinition in terms of health. Traditional attitudes toward female physiology and female sexuality are also apparent in the reports of five women that they were unprepared for menstruation, that other peoples' attitudes made them embarassed and self-conscious and/or that they were not given adequate information about their bodies. That women are often still uneducated at puberty about their female physiology and its functioning, and remain uneducated as adults, is indicative of a cultural attitude toward female sexuality as "not nice," a holdover from Victorian times. (Ehrenreich & English, 1978).

Clearly, there is a relation between the status of women as Other, and the lack of understanding of female physiology and lack of priority given to women in health care services. Fortunately for women, their relationships to their bodies and their health was one of the first issues to be dealt with by feminist action groups. Feminist health collectives and various individual physicians have criticized traditional approaches to women's health and have done much to promote safe

birth control methods, knowledge of female physiology and self-help care for women (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 1971; Cooke and Dworkin, 1979; Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers, 1981; Kleiber & Light, 1978; Norris, 1980; Pederson, 1979; Seaman & Seaman, 1977; Women's Healthsharing, 1979-1982). The issue of body image and women's experience of their appearance as unacceptable will be discussed under the heading, Women's Experience in Context. The issue of women's experience with the medical establishment will also be discussed in greater detail under that heading.

Four women experienced the inability to get pregnant, unwanted pregnancies, the fear of becoming pregnant, and having to always take the responsibility for not becoming pregnant as burdens. Two women experienced poor health as a burden. These topics, too, will be discussed under the heading, "Women's Experience in Context."

Struggling Against the Effects of Sexual Abuse in the Family

Four women suffered extreme abuse within their families: two were sexually abused by their fathers during childhood and two were battered wives. The effect on the two women in this study of having been sexually abused by their fathers was traumatic, as they explained. Elizabeth felt herself to be stigmatized as a child and Christine felt powerless and ashamed. Both women became severely depressed as young adults and required years of intensive therapy to work through their feelings and gain a positive sense of self. That these women were affected so severely is in keeping with the literature on incest victims which evidences the long-term effects on women of sexual abuse in the family. Experts explain that sexual abuse of children is most often perpetrated by the father, a man whose love and protection is supposed to be forthcoming and who is supposed to be respected, and is typically repeated many times over several years. The effect on women who are victims of such abuse can be extremely negative (Butler, 1978; Herman & Hirschman, 1977; MacFarlane, 1978; Rush, 1980). Herman and Hirschman (1977) explain that guilt and depression are universal clinical findings in father/daughter incest cases. Further, they explain that the effect on girls of having a sexually abusive father is so destructive that it dominates their young lives

and leaves long lasting emotional scars. MacFarlane names the key factors in determining how a child reacts to being sexually abused as the age and developmental status of the child, the relationship of the abuser to the child, the amount of force or violence used by the abuser, the degree of shame or guilt evoked in the child, and most importantly, the reactions of the child's parents and/or professionals who become involved. Key to understanding the reactions of Elizabeth and Christine, according to this analysis, is the fact that it was their father who was the perpetrator, and that they felt ashamed and guilty. Christine's fear of her father's frequently violent behaviour, and Elizabeth's further victimization by psychiatrists who failed to take seriously the psychological damage done to her and who instead accused her of fantasizing her abuse, dreaming it or inviting it, would also be considered by MacFarlane to be important factors. In addition, the fact that both women experienced sexual abuse repeatedly over a number of years, and that their sexual abuse was part of a general experience of exploitation and emotional neglect by both parents, seems important.

The importance of professionals' reactions to a victim's experience with incest was noted by MacFarlane, as is described above. Elizabeth's experience of being told by various psychiatrists that she imagined or invited her abuse is not unusual. As a therapist working with incest victims, I have been told numerous stories about psychiatrists and psychologists refusing to believe women's accounts of their assaults. Recently, one client reported that her psychiatrist responded to her story of her father's sexual assault with the following remark: "He must have been gentle with you so it couldn't have been that bad." Lerman's work on Freud exposed the tradition whereby psychiatrists (and psychologists who read psychoanalytic theory) learn to disbelieve women's stories of their father's sexual assaults. Thus psychiatrists (and psychologists) who have not been taught to critically examine Freud's theories and practices continue to disbelieve women. In other words, the message to women has been: "I can't deal with your experience so I'll negate it." Leidig (1980), whose client reported to her that her former psychiatrist got an erection as he listened to her account of her incest trauma, believes that generally male therapists have difficulty identifying with female

victims of sexual violence and instead identify with the male perpetrator. She concludes that male therapists should not be allowed to counsel incest victims. Many sexual assault centres, whose perspective is feminist, are aware of this same issue, and have formed the policy of allowing only women to work on their distress lines.

Researchers and people working with incest victims have noticed an increase in the reporting of incest over the past few years, although they maintain that we are still seeing only "the tip of the iceberg" (MacFarlane, 1978; Rush, 1980). Statistics from the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (1982) show that calls relating to assaults on children rose from 30 in 1977 to 128 in 1981. Further, their statistics show that reports of current incest increased from 20 to 28 and reports of past incest increased from 33 to 46, from the periods January-June, 1981 to January-June, 1982. The increase in reporting is interpreted as not necessarily reflecting an increase in incest, but as reflecting victims' recognition that it is permissible to talk about the subject. Rush, in her book, The Best Kept Secret (1980), explains how incest has been with us through the ages, and that knowledge of the sexual abuse of children has been the best kept secret in families across time, cultures, class, race and religions. That the family has been a social unit (sanctified by religious institutions and protected by the law) which gives men power over women and children has both encouraged men and protected them in their abuse of children. The status of women and children as subordinate to men (as Other) clearly affects their vulnerability, both to the male heads of families and to the male professionals to whom they turn for help after the initial damage is done. Much still needs to be done to help girls and women who have been incest victims according to researchers in the area. A change in social attitudes and structures (legal, economic, medical) which protect the advocates of incest (many of whom benefit financially from the sale of materials which exploit children as sexual objects) and which view incest as harmless to children (and even promote it as healthy and beneficial to children) also needs to be changed (Barry, 1979; Brownmiller, 1975; Ford, 1982; Rush, 1980).

Like incest, wife battering is considered a seriously underreported crime, with experts estimating that only one in 10 women report battering assaults (Alberta Society of Women Against Violence, 1982). However, from research done on women who do report being battered, it is evident that as with incest victims, battered women are found in all age groups, races, ethnic, religious and social-economic groups, and at all educational levels (Chegwidden, Felt & Miller, 1981; Walker, 1978). The common experiences of Heidi and Sally, the women in this study who were battered, was that they were abused psychologically as well as physically; the battering was unpredictable; their husbands were highly jealous, critical and threatening; and they themselves felt a need to conceal the battery. Further, both women had reasons for not leaving these marriages. Heidi saw herself as having no alternatives and no means of supporting herself and her children. She also believed the religious and social ideology which taught that a family must be headed by a man and that forbade divorce. Staying with her husband would enable her to give her children an education, she reasoned. She finally left her husband after 26 years of marriage. Sally understood that her young husband was too young to settle down, thus rationalized his abuse of her and resolved to keep trying to make their marriage work. She left the abusive relationship after two years of marriage.

Both Sally and Heidi suffered severe emotional and mental trauma as a result of their repeated battering experiences. Research on battered wives indicates that women do not stay in battering relationships because they like being beaten, as was once assumed by therapists who believed that women were essentially masochistic. Rather, women have stayed in battering relationships because of economic, legal and social dependence and because they have had no safe place to go. In most large Canadian cities women now have the alternative of seeking emergency shelter at a refuge for battered women and their children where supportive and career counselling is available. In Edmonton, WIN House (established in 1978) and WIN House II (established in 1982) operate to meet this need. This option was not available to Sally and Heidi when they were being battered, however. Statistics published by WIN House News (1981) show a steady

increase in the number of women and their families applying for accommodation in the first year and a half of operation. After this period, the number of applicants in a month stabilized to the present number: on the average, 18 to 21 families have been accommodated (for a maximum of three weeks each) and 40 families have been turned away each month, due to lack of space. Thus, in Edmonton, the need for a safe alternative for battered women and their families has still not been met. The nature of referrals has changed over the years, however. Whereas in the early months most women were referred to WIN House through social service agencies, the police, the Crisis Unit, etc., the majority of applicants are now self-referrals.

Providing emergency shelters and counselling services is only part of the solution according to Martin (1978) who states:

> Any solution to family violence must address the values and structure of society that permits and perpetuates crimes against women (p. 111).

Using deBeauvoir's terminology, we might state that any solution to family violence must address the values and structures of society which perceive and treat women as Other. According to experts, women who are battered by their husbands are also victims of a social structure whose laws have until recently condoned a husband's right to beat his wife and to retain full ownership of a family business upon marriage breakdown, whose economic practices limit the means by which women can become financially independent, whose differential socializing techniques teach boys that it is masculine for them to be aggressive and teach girls that it is feminine for them to be submissive, and whose religious institutions sanction the subjection of wives to their husbands (Barry, 1979; Martin, 1978; Walker, 1978, 1979). Fortune and Horman (1980), investigating religious issues in family violence, conclude that misuse and misinterpretation of the Judeo-Christian Tradition has had a detrimental effect on victims of family violence in so far as "It has contributed substantially to guilt, self-blame, and suffering which victims experience, and to the rationalization often used by offenders" (pp. 72-73). That the economic, legal and educational factors play a part is also verified in the research. In a follow-up study of formerly battered women, Ellsworth and Wagner (1980) determined that factors enabling women to stay out of a battering relationship were as follows: employment (67%), legal support (26%), education

(20%). Personal counselling was considered to be helpful by only 10% of the women studied. The authors concluded that traditional mental health settings were considered to be unsatisfactory because they lacked understanding of battered women's problems and were unable to offer concrete support.

Understanding that traditional mental health agencies have not been successful in helping battered women, feminists have attempted to understand the complex psychological reasons which have also played a part in keeping women in a battering situation (Barry, 1979; Martin, 1978; Painter, 1981; Walker, 1978, 1979). Walker (1978, 1979) believes that Seligman's theory of learned helplessness applies to battered wives – that women do not attempt to free themselves from a battering relationship because they are operating from a belief in their own helplessness. In other words, women have accepted the marriage relationship as unequal (their husbands have more power), do not expect to have control in their marriages because as women they are taught to be passive and submissive, and finally do become helpless, as they believe themselves to be. Painter (1981) has likened the emotional bonding between battered women and their partners to the emotional attachments formed by victims of cults, hostages, etc. to their oppressors, labelling this "traumatic bonding" (p. 57). Typical of traumatic bonding, she explains, are the features of power inbalance and intermittent violence. Under these circumstances, women tend to take responsibility for their partner's violent behavior. Their inability to control their husbands' behavior contributes to their sense of powerlessness and low self-esteem, which undercuts any attempts to leave the relationship. Clearly, these women have learned to perceive and experience themselves as Other. On the bright side, however, there is some evidence that the Women's Movement, which has increased public awareness regarding family violence, has been effective in reducing the rate of wife and child abuse. The fight for higher social status and greater economic power for women has had the effect of increasing women's sense of self-esteem and of encouraging them to reject their subordinate status in the family. Concludes American sociology professor, Murray Strauss, "The more equality you have in a home, the less likelihood there is of physical abuse of any

members" (1981). The conclusions and results reported by Martin and by Straus are a direct challenge to deBeauvoir's idea that the solution for women (whose psychology she believes reflects their status as Other) resides in their individual choice. Choice, it appears, is only a factor when safe alternatives are available, when society offers women equal opportunities, and when there is an ideology which supports and values women. Given the current state of lack of alternatives and opportunities for women and the presence of ideologies which support women's subordination, Heidi's and Sally's decisions to stay in their marriage as long as they did can also be understood as a choice based on intention. Heidi intended to provide her children with an education, Sally intended to give her husband time to mature, and both women intended to make a success of their marriages and to provide their children with a father.

Being Vulnerable to the Risk of Sexual Harrassment or Assault in the Community

Sexual assault and/or sexual harassment had been experienced and was reported to be an issue by seven of the 13 participants. The women had been variously assaulted by fellow students, friends, a delivery man and therapists, and had been harassed by clients, co-workers, a teacher and an employer. Their personal reactions varied from mild annoyance at inappropriate sexual advances, to frustration and depression related to a perceived inability to change the situation, to severe trauma related to job loss and expulsion from school as a result of trying to fight for the right not to be harassed. The participants were well aware, at the same time, that complaining about being assaulted or harassed could result in their being blamed for perpetuating the crime or having their integrity questioned. Thus it appears they were conscious that the "blame the victim" mentality (Ryan, 1976) operates against women (as it does against racial minority groups).

These results lend support to the literature which documents the widespread incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment of women by men (Barry, 1979; Becker & Abel, 1978; Brownmiller, 1975; Chapman, 1978; Evans, 1978; Kadar, 1982; MacKinnon, 1979; Storrie & Dykstra, 1982). Current feminist analyses have linked the various kinds of violence toward women (sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape, incest, battery, pornography, prostitution, etc.) to

prevailing stereotypes of women as good and sexless (like Mary) or bad and sexy (like Eve), to the subordinate position of women in relation to men, and to the barriers in society which keep women dependent on men and therefore powerless to change their situations (Barry, 1979; Becker & Abel, 1978; Chapman, 1978; Dworkin, 1974; Gates, 1978). Further, there is evidence supporting the feminist position that violence against women is generally considered "normal" and that forced sexuality is generally accepted (Check & Malamuth, 1981). Stark-Adamec & Adamec (1981) reviewed the literature on aggression against women and concluded:

> there has to be a climate in which aggression is both condoned and reinforced, a climate in which asymmetrical sex roles are adopted and the female devalued, for men to choose aggression as a response and women as a target for aggression (p. 59).

That the damage done to women (psychologically, socially, economically) who are victims of sexual assault or sexual harassment can be severe and long-lasting has been well documented (Backhouse & Cohen 1981; Kadar, 1982; Lear, 1978; MacKinnon, 1979; Saltzman, 1978). Further, that women who complain about harassment or who are victims of assault are likely to be blamed rather that defended, is evidenced in the research. A study by Briere, Malmuth, & Check (1981) on sexual attitudes and pro-rape beliefs produced results which suggest "that attitudes justifying rape and other sexual violence...occur among 'typical' individuals" (p. 49). That the prevailing attitude toward violence against women is one of acceptance, and that the typical reaction to a woman who has been a victim of sexual violence is that "she deserved it," supports the position of deBeauvoir that the social status of woman is as Other. Kadar (1982) maintains that sexual harassment of women works as a method of social control to keep women "in their place." Fox (1977) shares this view, explaining that the concept of "nice girl" restricts where women go and effectively keeps them out of men's way. However, it does not follow that women necessarily experience themselves as Other just because they are defined as such. The seven women in this study who had experienced sexual assault or harassment perceived this experience as negative and reacted against it. None of these women accepted violence against women fatalistically or felt that "they had it coming." Janeway (1980) interprets

this kind of resistence against being judged or blamed as one of the "powers of the weak." My experience counselling victims of sexual assault (and rape and incest) is that women requiring therapy frequently blame themselves in the early stages of therapy. (This blaming of self is analagous to the guilt felt by incest victims and the taking of responsibility for their assaults by battered women. All instances reflect the tendency of women and other members of minority status groups to denigrate themselves.) In this stage the women certainly experience themselves as Other. The immediate goal of the therapist in these situations is to help women to understand that the aggressors, not themselves, are responsible for the violence. In other words, the job of the therapist is to help women to experience themselves as Subject, not as Other.

Being Frustrated and in Conflict in the Roles of Wife and Mother

Being a woman also resulted in negative meaning for women in terms of the *roles* of wife and mother which they were *expected* to play. This finding supports the vast amount of literature (from the early feminist writings of the 1970s to the present) which documents how sex-role stereotyping has been problematic for women (Bardwick, 1979; Bernard, 1973a, 1974; Bird, 1971; Deaux, 1976; Donelson & Gullahorn, 1977; Fransella & Frost, 1977; Freeman, 1979; Friedan, 1963; Garskof, 1971; Glazer & Waehrer, 1977; Gornick & Moran, 1977; Greer, 1971; Janeway, 1971, 1974; Klein, 1972; Lerner, 1977; Morgan, 1970; Millet, 1971; Juliet Mitchell, 1973; Rothman, 1978; Safilios-Rothschild, 1977; Stanford, 1974; Sullerot, 1971; Unger, 1979; Washbourn, 1977; Weitz, 1977; Weitzman, 1979; Williams, 1977).

The *role* of wife was experienced as problematic for three out of six women currently married and for six out of seven women previously married. Specifically, this role was experienced negatively insofar as the women experienced a double standard in marriage with fewer rights and privileges given to wives, a devaluing of wives' work both in and outside the home, an assumption that it was the exclusive *duty* of wives to maintain the home and the psychological health of all family members, and an expectation that a wife *should be* emotionally, socially and financially dependent on her husband. In other words, these woman

experienced what Unger (1979) refers to as the institutionalization of male authority in marriage. Thus, the experience of the women in nine out of 13 marriages reflects the social status of women as Other. In practice as well as in theory, then, it has been demonstrated that the subordinate status of women in marriage reflects women's social status as Other. The relation, for women, between marriage and poor mental health has long been established (Gove & Tudor, 1973). More recently, Gede (1979) has established a correlation between marriage and depression for women. Greenglass (1981) maintains that marriage is still psychologically detrimental to women's health, as well as being socially and legally detrimental due to women's subordinate status in marriage. The married participants variously reacted to the double standard in marriage, their subordinate role, or the expectations placed on them as wives, with frustration, resentment, anger and depression.

That, in the majority of marriages, the women at various times suffered emotionally in relation to their role as wife suggests that to some extent at least they experienced themselves psychologically as Other. Brook's (1980) study on marital power supports this interpretation. Defining marital power as having two components, interpersonal power (over others) and self-power (having control and choice) he found that low self-power in women correlated with depression, and high self-power with marriage instability. In other words, women's choice was to rock the boat or get sick. Separation and/or divorce was certainly seen by the five participants who had this experience as a means to their gaining greater self-power (i.e., becoming Subject instead of Other). Even participants who had not been separated or divorced, however, did not passively or entirely accept this status, and it is also clear that they did not simply perceive of themselves as Other. For example, Joan accepted her subordinate status and devalued role in the early years of her marriage and consequently became severely depressed. With the blessing of her doctor she went to work part-time, felt more independent, experienced a sense of freedom and her health improved. Today she resents the double standard in her marriage, is working full-time in a career she enjoys despite her husband's lack of support, and desires to be treated as an equal partner by her

husband. At the same time she sometimes feels guilty for acting on her own behalf and is hesitant to communicate her feelings about changing the family's place of residence. What we see is a woman struggling against the assumptions made by her husband, and generally structured in marriage, that she is Other. In this struggle there are areas where Joan has achieved a true sense of herself as Subject of her life, and other areas where she continues to operate as Other. An examination of her married history reveals that at different stages she experienced herself as Other to different degrees and that her mental health deteriorated or improved in direct relation to her sense of self.

The struggle against being Other in the role of wife was the experience of women in nine out of a total of 13 marriages in this study. As well as relating to women's subordination in marriage, the experience of Other might also be related to the relatively powerless position of a housewife. Fransella and Frost (1977) discuss the lack of real control over events experienced by housewives as the most stressful aspect of the job. Recognizing the lack of power experienced by women who as housewives generally are dependent on their husbands and children for a sense of self-worth, feminist researchers are investigating the experiences of such women - women who in mid-life are now experiencing a crisis (Rubin, 1979; Sanguiliano, 1980). I have witnessed the same phenomena in women who take the Second Look course I teach through the Women's Program, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta. Typically, these women lack self-confidence and a sense of self-worth, having long ago conceded to their subordinate role in marriage or having lost confidence in their ability to be meaningfully involved in their community. Through exercises in self-awareness, improving communication skills, assessing strengths and abilities, raising level of consciousness, examining alternatives and building a support system, they come to experience themselves as Subject instead of Other.

Loss of marriage through death was a negative experience for two participants (Denise and Sally), even though Sally's marriage had been largely destructive for her. In addition to emotional loss these women experienced financial hardship, social difficulties, and the stress of being single parents. Barrett

(1977) has documented the experiences and problems of widows. She maintains that many of the stresses of widowhood could be avoided if social attitudes changed and if social institutions were more supportive.

As regards the remaining four marriages, one woman did not speak of her marriage at all, and two women felt equal in their marriages (one in her current marriage and one in both her current and past marriages). These latter two women had both been taught deliberately by one or both parents that as women they were of equal value to men and deserved to be respected. In other words, they had been taught early to think of themselves as Subject and to expect others to treat them as Subject as well.

The *role* of mother was problematic for six of the eight women who were mothers, in so far as they were *expected* to be exclusively responsible for child care and perceived this as unfair or burdensome, they were *expected* to be naturally and consistently nurturing and felt guilty when they were not, they were *expected* to obtain satisfaction from nurturing their children and to not require further satisfaction from other work, they were isolated in their homes and lacked contact with other adults, they became exhausted or depressed from being continually (and often exclusively) responsible for their children, and/or they experienced conflict with regard to their desire to develop their own identities or careers and their simultaneous desire to be "good mothers." Further, the women were additionally frustrated or overwhelmed by circumstances outside of their control (unsupportive or abusive husbands, poverty, lack of adequate day care, lack of emotional or social support, too many additional responsibilities, etc.) which made the job of nurturing more difficult. Thus, the *role* of mother, which is assumed to be based on women's *natural* abilities and to involve activities which therefore *should be* desireable and fulfilling, is demonstrated to be problematic. The conflict, frustration, and exhaustion variously experienced by the six mothers in this study supports this. (The two women who did not experience the role of mother as negative were now grandmothers. When their children were small they also had been involved in their paid work.) Further, the guilt experienced by the women is indicative of their struggles with the expectations they experience in the

role of mother. The problems of women who in their roles of mother are expected to be all-giving are outlined by Albert (1971) in her article, "The Unmothered Woman." In an article entitled, "Taking on the Double Day," Luxton (1981) addresses the problems faced by women who take on paid work and in addition assume total responsibility for family and household maintenance. Woolsey-Toews (1975) relates the expectations on women to be always nurturing, responsible for others and self-sacrificing to their self-devaluation. She states:

> The 'long suffering' aspect of traditional femininity which makes so many women bear the brunt of family problems, nurturing others almost beyond their own endurance and leaving so little room in their lives for their own needs and self-development may well be an aspect of this sense of self-devaluation (p. 33).

It seems, then, that as regards the role of mother, the expectation is that women be Other. For the women in this study, difficulty with the role of mother evoked more guilt than did the role of wife. Thus it may be that women who are mothers may be at greater risk of experiencing themselves as Other than are women who are simply wives but not mothers. Support for this interpretation is found in a recent study by Brooks (1980) on marital power. She determined that women's marital power was adversely affected by increased numbers of children and the higher status of husbands.

It appears that the younger women in this study were more willing than women of their mother's generation to admit to feelings of dissatisfaction in the roles of wife and mother. Rossi (1972) has written that women are more likely to express ambivalence or negative feelings about roles which are optional. One of the goals of the Women's Movement has been to make women aware of their choices as regards marriage and motherhood, as well as other issues. Perhaps the younger participants' willingness to discuss their negative feelings about being wives and mothers is related in part to their seeing marriage and motherhood as an option. In any case, when the roles of wife and mother do not fit, it appears that women are left without guidelines or support for breaking with tradition. Fransella & Frost (1977) support this interpretation, and explain as follows:

> In other words, when a woman knows that she does not fit the expected roles, she has got problems. She may be uncomfortable with the traditional pattern, but she still does not know how to be happy, or accepted, if she steps out of it. Compared with her, the more 'traditional' woman has an easier time of it (p. 83).

Experiencing Sexist Attitudes and Discriminatory Practices in Relation to Education and Career

Being subject to sexist attitudes or discriminatory practices which limited their length and choice of formal education and/or their career choice and advancement has been a negative experience for 10 of the 13 women interviewed. These findings lend support to the vast amount of literature which has documented the problems for women of living in a society whose dominant attitudes toward them are sexist and whose educational and economic structures and policies discriminate against them (Bird, 1971; Chesler & Goodman, 1976; Connelly, 1978; Epstein, 1971; Fransella & Frost, 1977; Friedan, 1963; Garskof, 1971; Glazer & Waehrer, 1977; Gornick & Moran, 1971; Janeway, 1971; Lerner, 1977; Juliet Mitchell, 1971; Mitchell & Oakley, 1976; Oakley, 1974; Rothman, 1978; Rowbotham, 1974; Stanford, 1974; Stephenson, 1973; Sullerot, 1971). According to Isaacs (1981), while attitudes toward women's performance has changed somewhat over the 70s, women continue to be valued as less capable than men unless they show signs of obvious success and high status, or have already distinguished themselves in their field. Still, then, research findings demonstrate what deBeauvoir has termed women's status as Other in regard to education and paid work. However, according to the reports of the participants, it does not always follow that women psychologically experience themselves simply as Other in the face of sexism and discrimination. This can be true to a greater or lesser extent for some women at certain times in particular circumstances. For example, Joan and Madelaine were *channeled* into secretarial school at ages 16 and 18, Marcela entered a fashion designing program and Alice a home economics program because they were *acceptable* fields for women. Dissatisfied with these "choices," all of these women eventually left or changed vocations. Madelaine is now a full-time homemaker and Alice operates a restaurant. Neither of these women perceive sexist attitudes or discriminatory practices in their present work. However, Joan and Marcela, both of whom have since entered male-dominated

professions, have continued to experience sexism and discrimination. Specifically, Joan has been aware of sexist attitudes toward her in her former work as a ceramic tile installer and today she is aware of discriminatory practices against women in the area of commercial real estate. The sexist attitudes she experienced while operating a ceramic tile business did not prevent her from carrying on. However, she has to this point been sufficiently discouraged by discriminatory practices in commercial real estate to not attempt to enter that specialty. She is fully conscious that it is her opportunity that is limited, however, and does not assume that she is, therefore, less capable than men. What we see, then, is Joan actively rejecting other's evaluations of her as Other in the first situation, and being confronted and discouraged by barriers which assume her Otherness in the second situation. In neither circumstance does she psychologically experience herself as Other, however, conscious as she is that the reason for the sexism and discrimination that she experiences lies in factors external to herself. Marcela, on the other hand, appears to experience herself as Other psychologically, in spite of the fact that she rejects the status of women as Other. In her studies at the university in a field which is entirely male-dominated, she persists with her work and is highly successful. Yet she continually doubts her abilities, believing at some level that because she is female she can never be as good as the male professors she emulates. Consequently, she is highly anxious.

There are theories which attempt to describe the situations which give rise to women's difficulty in relation to education and paid work, and which explain women's response to these situations. Freeman (1975, 1979) has formulated the "null environment hypothesis" to explain the lack of reinforcement received by female students compared to males. Even an academic setting which neither encourages nor discourages students of either sex is discriminating, she maintains, given that females are socialized to expect low achievement for themselves and to rely on external sources for their self-esteem. Attribution research demonstrates that women and men generally do not experience success the same way because women have been socialized to be helpless and to view themselves as incompetent and unsuccessful (Gannon, 1980; Lips, 1979). Lips (1979) explains that even when

women's behavior is viewed by others to be a demonstration of power and strength, women may maintain a self-image of weakness and powerlessness. This theory can help us to understand Marcela's experience of herself as Other in spite of her outward success. It does not help us to understand Joan's experience, however. Anyon's (1981) work on women's accommodation and resistance to the confines of femininity speaks to both women's experience. She has demonstrated that women neither totally accept nor totally reject social expectations that they be feminine. Rather, they actively resist their definition in some ways and accommodate in others. In her words,

> Most women neither totally acquiesce to nor totally resist the social imperatives of femininity. Rather, most women engage in daily (and usually unconscious) attempts to resist the psychological degradation and low self-esteem that would result from total application of the attitudes and behaviors of submissiveness, dependency, passivity. Women's attempts to negotiate these demands – to mediate the contradiction between femininity and competence as it is socially defined – exhibit resistance and accommodation in the dialectic proposed by Genovese for Blacks: accommodation that embodies resistance; and resistance that is embedded in daily accommodations (p. 18).

Using Anyon's theory we can begin to understand how participants have both resisted and accommodated to the confines of femininity. Joan, for example, can be seen to resist the expectation that women's *proper place* is in the home (although in her early married life she accommodated to this expectation), and has proceeded to work outside of her home. In doing so she has actively resisted her husband's and his friends' assumptions that she is not capable of being a financial success. In this sense she has rejected her status as Other. At the same time, Joan outwardly accommodates to the role of wife by allowing her husband to make major decisions such as the family's place of residence. However, she inwardly judges the relationship to be unfair, resents that her husband "needs to be the boss" and desires to feel an equal partner in the marriage. Anyon (1981) calls this kind of outer accommodation and inner resistance the public/private discrepancy in women's accommodation and resistance. She explains that while women may resist the definition of femininity inwardly, they may outwardly appear accommodating. In other words, while a woman's overt behavior gives the impression that she perceives herself as Other (Joan's accommodation to her

husband's need to be "the boss") she may covertly resist the definition of Other (Joan's resentment of the double standard in her marriage and judgement that it is unfair). The opposite can also happen. Anyon explains that a public/private discrepancy occurs when women publically resist the stereotype but accommodate internally by devaluing themselves or other women. An example of this phenomenon is Marcela's public resistance to women's inferior status through active organization on behalf of women's concerns, and her private accommodation in the form of her personal self-doubt academically (in spite of her numerous awards, etc.) and her devaluing of her own and other women's emotions. Thus, what may appear to be a rejection of women's status as Other may hide a psychological experience of Otherness.

Anyon's theory of accommodation and resistance allows us to understand the complexity of women's psychological experience to the status of Other. It also helps us to understand that women's experience can change over time. However, in order to understand why particular women accommodate to or resist social expectations, and what is operating when they change their behavior, goals or attitudes toward themselves, we need to examine the context of their experience. This will be done in the final section of this chapter.

Experiencing Sexist Attitudes and Discriminary Practises in the Community Generally

Expectations that they *should* look and act feminine, be married, stay home, restrict their type of work and be satisfied with no or low wages, and that they are *naturally* less intelligent and less capable but more nurturing than men, were experienced negatively by eight of the 13 participants. That the definitions of what women *should* be or *naturally* are reflect women's subordinate status to men and their devaluation compared to men is well established in the literature, as has already been demonstrated above. That the definition and devaluation of femininity reflects women's social status as Other has also been demonstrated. However, as has been demonstrated in relation to other dimensions of the participants' lives, it does not automatically follow that these women experienced themselves as Other. Again, Anyon's (1981) theory of resistance and accommodation is helpful in

understanding how the women reacted to their definition as Other. For example, Beret describes herself as having always been a "tomboy" who resisted any restrictions on her *behavior*. However, she accepted the judgment of her mother and a woman in her community that her *appearance* was not acceptable because she was big and tall (i.e., she did not resemble the small and dainty feminine ideal). Thus, in one sense (in regard to behavior) Beret rejected her definition as Other, and in another sense (in regard to appearance) she experienced herself psychologically as Other. In fact she has been self-conscious about her size and appearance her whole life and at age 69 continues to judge herself in this respect. In order to understand why Beret resisted expectations regarding her behavior but accommodated to expectations regarding her appearance, we would need to investigate more thoroughly the context of her experience. Again, this will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

For Jean and Alice, not being married means being judged as being unsuccessful as women. It is widely evidenced that the idea that women must be married reflects patriarchal assumptions that women's sexuality must be controlled and that women should be dependent on and subordinate to men who are their moral and intellectual superiors. Agonito (1977) illustrates the origin of these patriarchal assumptions in the writings of Genesis, Aristotle, Plutarch, Paul, Augustine; through Aquinas, Bacon, Rousseau, Hume, Kant and Hegel; to Schopenhauer, Darwin, Nietzsche and Freud. That women who do not conform to social expectations relating to marriage are judged to be abnormal, deviant or "unlucky oddities" has also been illustrated (Bernard, 1973a; Janeway, 1971). Safilios-Rothschild (1977) relates the disdain for unmarried women to the fact of women being treated as objects - single women are not valuable because they have not been chosen by a man (who is Subject and has the power to choose). As a result of being treated like objects, women's self-concept is affected, she maintains - they become "psychologically unequal" (p. 3). This may, indeed, explain the anxiety and sense of unworthiness experienced by Jean in regard to her single status. It does not, however, speak to Alice's present attitude of accepting, liking and enjoying herself as a single woman. Alice explains that as a child she judged

single women to be unsuccessful, largely because she assumed them to be sexless. She believes that later, as a young adult, she avoided taking responsiblity for her life because she was "waiting for the right man" to give her life meaning. At age 31 she decided not to wait any longer and to pursue a goal of her own making. At this point she was no longer perceiving herself as Other and through her action began to experience herself as the Subject of her life. Now her aunts' judgments of her as unsuccessful because she is single hurt only momentarily because she does not judge herself on the same terms, unlike Jean.

Denise and Sally have experienced sexist attitudes concerning women's capabilities and intelligence. Both women reject these attitudes, however, believing that women are as capable and intelligent as men. Thus, while perceiving attitudes which reflect women's status as Other, they resist these judgments with regard to themselves and other women – they do not experience themselves psychologically as Other. Denise explains that 10 years ago she was not conscious of sexist attitudes. Having been brought up by parents who believed in women's equal worth and intelligence, she assumed that everyone believed the same. Now she recognizes this assumption not to be true. At the same time she did once experience herself as Other in that she learned that as a woman she was expected to sacrifice her own needs for others. Having become conscious that this expectation on women is unfair and unhealthy, she now feels it is her right to express her own needs. In this sense she now experiences herself as Subject. Denise has also experienced discrimination because of her age – an attitude toward her on the part of a young man who assumed she could be easily dismissed or ignored because she was "just an old lady." According to Bell (1979) women suffer from discrimination in relation to age more so than do men. Feminist researchers have developed another area of expertise in relation to the double status of Other experienced by older women (Abu-Laden, 1981; Markson & Hess, 1980; Sontag, 1979).

Theresa has experienced sexist attitudes on the part of a teacher who discriminated against the girls in his class, on the part of neighbors who judged her for doing "men's work" and on the part of community members who refused to

take seriously the women's concerns regarding a community project. In all situations Theresa rejected the judgment that she was Other. In Anyon's (1981) words, she resisted the definitions of femininity which limited her concept of self, restricted her activities and devalued her concerns. Theresa also rejects the judgments made on women she works with, that they are Other in that the work they do in the home is not valued, the work they do outside the home is not paid well, and their morality is questioned when they enter fields of work traditionally defined as "men's work." Like Theresa, Elizabeth resists the definition of herself and other women as Other – that they are subordinate to and less valuable than men. She is actively attempting to change people's awareness by producing statistics in her field of work which evidence women's oppression by sexist attitudes and discriminatory practices. Elizabeth's experience with the men in her office is that they negate the validity of the statistics she presents, much to her amazement. There is evidence in the literature that whereas women have become more aware of women's real potential and worth, men have not. In 1968, Goldberg produced evidence showing that both females and males stereotyped and devalued women. More than a decade later, Percival and Percival (1979, 1982) demonstrated that men but not women stereotype women and perceive them as different and as unequal. They explain that men continue to see women in relation to their own needs (as loving, emotional, sensitive, sensuous and submissive) rather than as their equals – that in men's eyes a woman "is someone to love, perhaps, more than someone to respect" (1979, p.77). It appears, then, that during the 1970s (the years when the Women's Movement blossomed) women's perceptions and judgments of women changed but men's did not. This finding lends support to the results of this study which demonstrate that although women's status and formal definition is Other, women in some ways or to some degree reject this status and experience themselves psychologically as Subject.

The Positive Meanings of Being a Woman

The positive meanings of being a woman, while demonstrating that women do not simply experience themselves as Other, are also important to examine in order that we understand the ways women find their lives as women to be satisfying.

Being Womanly, Feminine, Sexual, or Desirable

The first category of positive meanings involved women's comfort and/or enjoyment in relation to their physical sense of self, varyingly referred to as "womanhood," "femininity," "sexuality" or "attractiveness." Most of the participants (11/13) experienced themselves positively in this sense, although for some it seemed a major issue and for others it was minor. Thus, it appears that these women to various degrees experienced themselves in relation to their bodies as Subject. This result challenges the position of deBeauvoir that women are psychologically Other. That the women felt differently about their physical selves over time is also evidenced. Marcela, Joan and Mary discuss the changes in their feelings toward sex and changes in levels of sexual activity; Christine discusses how her sexual focus has changed from men to women; and Madelaine discusses how being seen as attractive by men has changed in meaning to her, from being powerful to being appreciated. Thus it appears that over time, women's experience of their sexual or womanly selves can change. Further, it appears that the change sometimes involves a sense of self as varyingly Other or Subject. Mary, for example, has varyingly experienced her sexual self as Subject and as Other. With her first husband she experienced herself as Subject prior to their marriage; after the marriage, when she began to feel exploited, she experienced herself as Other; and finally, reaffirming her self as Subject she refused sexual contact with him. Christine experienced herself sexually as Other with her husband; when she left him and became sexually involved with a woman she experienced herself as Subject.

It is important here to take a closer look at the meanings five women have for the term, "feminine," used by them to describe their physical sense of self. Feminine has traditionally and historically been used to describe the character of women – the personality traits and behaviors of women thought to be somehow based in female physiology (Klein, 1971; Laidlaw, 1978). Although the traits associated with femininity have varied somewhat over time, current trait theory associates the qualities of passivity, weakness, emotionality, submissiveness, and dependence with femininity. In this study, only one of the five women (Alice) who

described themselves as "feminine" also considered herself to be weak, submissive and dependent. The other four women experienced themselves varyingly as strong, determined, rebellious, active and aggressive. In describing their femininity, these four women were not speaking of the character traits traditionally associated with femininity, but of their female sexuality. Therefore, a close examination of what Alice and Theresa, for example, mean when they refer to themselves as feminine reveals a great difference in meaning. To Theresa, being feminine means she is appreciated as a woman as well as for her capabilities – that her female sexuality is acknowledged and that it is respected. At the same time as being feminine, Theresa feels she can be capable, strong, independent, a thinker and a fighter if need be. To Alice, being feminine means being charming, sweet, quiet and subordinate to men. She, too, sees herself as capable and independent but not as aggressive. Unlike Theresa, who will confront situations directly and stand up for herself and others, Alice consciously uses her "feminine wiles" to charm and manipulate others and thereby influence their behavior. To her, being feminine means she does not behave aggressively in her job, and that in her relationships with men she generally acts in a submissive and dependent manner. From the outside, then, it appears that Theresa defines her feminine self as Subject while Alice defines her feminine self as Other. However, a closer examination of what Alice means by feminine reveals that this is not so. Instead, two different meanings of femininity emerge. First, Alice perceives herself as feminine in terms of her appearance – when with a big, strong man she feels "the picture of a woman." Secondly, she interprets her feminine behavior (submissiveness, dependence) as a kind of play-acting – "playing feminine" – conscious that deliberately engaging in this behavior enables her to manipulate men with her "feminine wiles." Anyon (1981) describes this type of behavior as another kind of public accommodation/private resistance to the ideology of femininity. Anyon believes that this behavior serves the purpose of gaining protection, achieving power indirectly or portraying a non-threatening image in order to ensure success. Thus, the appropriation of such feminine behavior is used to benefit the woman in some sense, and her knowledge that it involves deception guards against loss of

self-esteem, should she be judged by others. That knowledge of her own deception served to protect Alice in this way is evidenced (in the Case Study) in her discussion of an incident involving a male clerk who refused to speak to her directly. The clerk consistently looked at and spoke to Alice's father even though it was Alice who asked him questions. Rather than feeling powerless in the situation, Alice felt strong and smug, knowing that she had "a secret" about her knowledge and abilities that the clerk did not perceive. She pretended to be Other, knowing she was really a Subject. Outwardly she remained sweet and submissive; inwardly she rejected the man and judged him to be her inferior. Finally, the point needs to be made that whereas the stereotype of women teaches that women are *naturally* manipulative, only one in 13 women in this study (Alice) described herself as such. Further, it is clear that Alice perceived her manipulative behavior as acting – a conscious means of influencing others and forwarding her own aims.

Finding Fulfillment in Nurturing Children

Another dimension of experience that some participants found satisfying involved their children. Of the eight women interviewed who had children, all stated that they valued their children. Two women (Denise and Beret) felt "luckier" than men to have the opportunity to be close to their children, and to have a responsibility that was satisfying to them personally and resulted in a sense of achievement. Both women were in their 60s and therefore had worked as mothers in a time when it was strongly believed that nurturing children was *natural* for women. (This they believed in spite of their common experience that their fathers were "softer" and "more gentle" than their mothers.) Further, both women had full-time careers for most of their lives and therefore were not restricted to their homes and to the work of child-care. A third woman (Christine) also enjoyed nurturing her children, although this had not always been the case. She, too, works full-time outside her home. Being a single parent, she is sometimes in conflict and exhausted as a result of being the only adult to provide for all of her children's and her own needs. Aside from these difficulties, however, Christine, like Denise and Beret, values the act of nurturing her children, feels satisfied in this work and perceives it to be an achievement. Clearly, these three women experienced

themselves as Subject in the role of mother.

Of the remaining five women who have children, nurturing their children has been conflicting, frustrating, depressing, and uncomfortable as was earlier discussed. Thus, whereas all eight women with children valued their children highly, less than half actually found the act of nurturing them satisfying. The social expectations that women *naturally* feel nurturing toward their children, that this activity alone is enough to satisfy them and that the responsibility for nurturing children *properly* falls to the mother alone, appear to undermine women's relationships to their children and their ability to be nurturing. Motherhood, as it has been defined and institutionalized in our society, actually works against the nurturing capacity that women (and men) might have, were they given the support they need, the credit they deserve and the choice to not limit their activities strictly to nurturing children. In other words, the definition of mothers as Other may interfere with the women's experiencing of themselves as Subject in the role of mother. This finding and interpretation is supported by Bernard's (1974) finding that women today are daring to state that while they love their children, they hate the institution of motherhood. Bernard found that women object to being assigned sole responsibility for their children, to having child care conceived of as their only major activity, to the isolation they experience in the role of mother, and to the romanticized notions of what nurturing children involves. She concludes that "the way we institutionalize motherhood is bad for women" (p. 14). Further, she believes that when motherhood is stressful rather than fulfilling and when women feel frustrated, conflicted and depressed, children also suffer. From this understanding has grown a new area of investigation in feminist psychology which is examining the effects on children, women and men and on society generally, of expecting women alone to be the nurturing element in society (Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1976; Rich, 1976).

Being Warm, Caring, Sensitive, Understanding and Helpful

Another positive experience of being a woman was having the ability to be warm, caring, sensitive, understanding and/or helpful human beings. Six of the participants described themselves thus. Generally, being this kind of person was

important to these six women, who perceived their behavior as a means by which connections could be made to others and something worthwhile achieved. In this sense, they experienced themselves as Subject. It is important to note that being warm, sensitive, etc. did not necessarily correlate with being nurturing toward children. One woman who has children but who does not feel a deep love for them values that she can be understanding and helpful to others. Two women who do not have children (one out of choice) value that they can be understanding and caring to others. Thus, it appears that being nurturing toward children does not necessarily go hand-in-hand with being warm and sensitive to others. Further, although the stereotype of women is that they are *naturally* nurturing, sensitive, warm, caring, understanding and helpful to everyone (Fransella & Frost, 1977), in this study less than half of the women described themselves, in these terms. Perhaps given the choice to say what they value about themselves rather than to choose from a list of values, women are freed from having to say they are warm and helpful. As is the case with nurturing children, there appears to be a gap between ideology and reality.

A point needs to be made here about the interpretations of the six women who experienced themselves as warm, caring, etc. One woman (Denise) believed that she enjoyed being understanding and helpful to others *because* she was a woman; three women (Beret, Christine, Elizabeth) believed that being a woman in this society *allowed* them to have this experience; and two women (Theresa, Madelaine) attributed this experience to their individual personalities or interests. Anyon's (1981) theory of accommodation and resistance may be helpful only in so far as it explains superficially the different psychological experience of women who see themselves as warm and caring, and those who do not. However, this does not help us to understand the differences in the beliefs of the six women who do experience themselves as warm, caring, etc. Denise's perception of herself as helpful is accompanied by her assumption that because the stereotype of women as understanding and helpful *fits* her, these behaviors are *natural* to women generally. In her case, ideology takes precedence over reality. On the other hand, Beret, Christine and Elizabeth are conscious that their own personalities

are congruent with social expectations placed on women. They perceive themselves as lucky to have the freedom to express this part of themselves, believing that men are restricted in this sense not because of innate differences but because of social expectations. Because Theresa and Madelaine attributed their experience of being warm, caring, etc. to their individual selves, it is impossible to ascertain whether or not they are conscious of social expectations placed on women in this respect.

Finding Satisfaction in Achieving Relationships

All of the participants found satisfaction in achieving relationships – in connecting or bonding to others.

1. Marriage or Cohabiting

Five women (Denise, Theresa, Mary, Madelaine, Marcela) valued the intimate connections they had with current husbands or cohabitants and Denise valued a previous marriage also. These six relationships were valued because the women experienced satisfaction in working toward common goals with a partner and in finding in their partner a good friend, companion or person to be respected. For example, Theresa spoke of feeling an equal partner with her husband and Marcela spoke of valuing the particular intimacy she experienced with her lover. In these relationships, then, the women seem to have experienced themselves as Subject. However, it is important, once again, to recognize that more than half of the marriages (three out of six current and six out of seven previous) were experienced as frustrating, unsatisfying or destructive. This finding has already been discussed under the section on Negative Meanings. That the reality of marriage often does not meet the dream is widely documented (Bernard, 1973a; Komarovsky, 1967; Rubin, 1976). Why marriage is often experienced as satisfying or frustrating and how this relates to women's status as Other has been thoroughly investigated by Bernard (1972) who concludes that marriage is more destructive for women, despite their claims to happiness, judging by the poorer mental and emotional health of married women compared to married men. The phrase, "despite their claims to happiness" requires that the

relationships and mental health of women who value their husbands or lover be examined more closely. It has already been established that Mary and Madelaine suffered from depression, lack of confidence, a sense of powerlessness and/or low self-esteem. It has been established, too, that Mary and Madelaine at various times have resented their subordinate status in the role of wife and the sacrifices they were *expected* to make in this role. It seems likely, then, that whereas a husband can be respected or appreciated and the connection to him valued, that the *institution* of marriage (like the institution of motherhood) can undermine the capacity of the woman to function as a healthy individual.

2. Family of Origin

Families of origin remained a meaningful connection for 10 of the 13 women interviewed. The family member to whom a woman felt the strongest connection differed, as did the meaning of the connection. Family might mean a source of on-going, mutual support and love (Alice), on-going conflict or discomfort (Sally), a connection to the past (Jean), or a connection to an idea of family (Marcela). Further, the meanings of family change over time, as with all else. More will be said about families in the section dealing with Context, however.

3. Friendships

Friendships were highly valued by 12 of the 13 women interviewed. They were varyingly perceived as a substitute for family who lived far away or had died (Jean, Beret) or as more than family - people with whom one could speak openly, and experience mutual closeness, acceptance, support and growth (Theresa, Elizabeth, Christine). In other words, friendships were valued because they were relationships in which the women experienced themselves as Subject. Commenting on the difference between family and friends, Bernikow (1980) makes the same point.

> To move from family to friends is like throwing the window open on the first day of spring. The word 'bond' comes to take on a different meaning, one that emphasizes its positive side, the connectedness, and submerges the negative, the bondage. Choice breezes in. One can take and leave a friend with more ease than one can embrace...(family). At the same time, the anchor lifts, for

> family is at the same time security, rootedness, belonging, and one begins to move in a world of friends with greater risk, less assurance (pp. 112-113).

Connections to others apart from conjugal and original families have not generally been regarded as important in psychological or counselling literature (Miller, 1976; Robson & Edwards, 1980). Miller (1976) suggests that this is so because the model for human development is male and stresses the so-called masculine attributes of independence and self-enhancement. She hypothesizes that whereas women's cultivated need for affiliation has been devalued, in actuality men also have this need but have learned to treat it with disdain - as feminine and therefore not to be valued. That humanistic therapy is teaching men to accept their need for affiliation is not enough, however, according to Miller. Rather, she believes, it is important to recognize that society needs to be reorganized such that men as well as women learn to value their affiliations, and that women learn they can *choose* affiliations which are supportive and will further their growth as self-determining individuals. As is the case with other issues relating to women, feminists have been first to recognize the importance of friendships generally, and women's friendships with women, particularly. That the area of relationships and friendships deserves in-depth study in psychology, is attested to by the fact that an American journal, Psychology of Women Quarterly, devoted one entire volume (5-3, 1981) to the topic. Safilios-Rothschild (1981), editor of this volumne, attributes "the explosion of relationships and the focus on intimacy" in the 1970s to women's increasing liberation, a growing "single" population, a questioning of the validity of achievement in the "rat-race," and a challenging of systemic barriers to success.

In this study, seven women spoke specifically of friendships with other women, valued because of the mutual sharing and understanding experienced. Four of these women reported that their friendships with women had changed as a direct result of the Women's Movement, and three saw the change in their friendships with women as relating to the changes in their own life circumstances (i.e., going out to work, meeting women like

themselves, etc.). The feminist concept of sisterhood – the bond between women that comes from a shared understanding of their experiences of their oppression as women – has grown out of women's friendships such as the ones described in this study. In feminist therapy, women's relationships with women are considered as important as their relationships with men (Robson & Edwards, 1980; Sturdivant, 1980). That women's friendships with women has therapeutic value was demonstrated in a recent study by Davidson and Packard (1981). Specifically, they found that same-sex friendships contributed to the "personal growth, support or change of women" (p. 508). Further discussion about women's friendships with women will follow in the final section of this chapter.

Finding Satisfaction in Work Outside the Home

Eleven of the 13 women interviewed found satisfaction in paid work outside the home. Specifically, work was experienced as satisfying because it gave a sense of independence or control (for six women), it resulted in a feeling of being capable (for seven women), it represented a challenge (for five women), and it resulted in a feeling of being helpful or appreciated (for seven women). These results suggest that paid work has psychological as well as financial benefits for women, as for men – they no longer see themselves as subordinate, and rather than experiencing themselves as Other, experience themselves as Subject. This finding supports the work of Luxton (1981) who maintains that married women, aside from working for financial gain, also work because from paid work they derive a sense of independence, satisfaction, pride and sociability. That the benefits to married women of paid work include mental health is evidenced by Unger (1979), who reports that wives who work outside of the home are happier than those who do not.

Bardwick (1979) relates a change in attitude toward women working in the last decade to a general change in attitude toward work itself, as well as toward women. Paid work is perceived, more than any other commitment, she explains, as providing a means to self-fulfillment; and women are actively seeking paid work in order to develop their potential as well as to pay their bills. Working outside of

the home is more ego-affirming than working as a full-time wife and mother, Bernard (1974) maintains, because the roles of wife and mother are narrow and leave little room for individualism. Still, according to Bernard, married women with children often experience much conflict between the traditional definition of themselves as wife and mother and their potential definition as an individual, developed through paid work. Stress may be experienced, too, in the daily reality of meeting the demands of a job and a family. This conflict and stress was demonstrated most clearly in the case of Mary, who was painfully torn between caring for her children and developing a career of her own, and had been exhausted from having attempted both simultaneously. In a state of mild depression as a result of this and other conflicts, Mary did not report finding either paid work or child-care satisfying, either when she was working for pay or since she had quit. Madelaine, too, experienced conflict, but on an ideological level rather than in reality: she imagined there would be conflict with her husband if she went out to work. However, her anticipated conflict and lack of confidence was enough to inhibit her from seeking work outside of her home.

With regard to the 11 women who were working, valued their work and experienced little or no conflict about working, three had no children and no partners (Jean, Alice, Elizabeth), two had no children and were living with partners who considered them equal (Theresa, Marcela), two were retired but had once been working mothers due to circumstances beyond their control (Beret, Denise), two were single parents who had no choice but to work (Sally, Christine), one had grown children and was working to establish an independent life since her divorce (Heidi), and one had been directed to go out to work by her doctor after having become depressed from staying at home with her children (Joan). In other words, the women who experienced little or no conflict about working either did not have to deal with the restrictions of wife and/or mother roles, had a good reason for working which outweighed the restrictions imposed by the wife and mother roles (i.e., they were single parents, divorced or responding to community needs), or they were professionally and personally supported in their choice of work.

One more point needs to be made concerning the issue of paid work. Feminist theorists, who have professional status in their chosen "careers," often make an elitest judgment that women who work at "jobs" demanding little pay, are victimized. It is true that low wages for women are discriminatory and that women are victimized in this sense. However, the "job" which may seem meaningless, trivial or boring to a "career woman" (even a feminist career woman) may be experienced by the woman who holds the job as satisfying and challenging, and as giving her a sense of independence or control. Fransella and Frost (1977) believe that we know very little about what particular jobs mean to women. The results of this study, however, demonstrate that a job need not have the status of a professional career in order to provide satisfaction or a sense of independence. Both Sally, who was a paid homemaker, and Heidi, who was a house cleaner, enjoyed their work for the reasons stated above. Denise took pride and found satisfaction in her jobs as a cashier and later as a secretary. Elizabeth, who was once a nurse, now enjoys the freedom and lack of stress that being a secretary offers her. This finding directly challenges the theory of deBeauvoir (and the beliefs of many feminist sociologists, as well) that because a woman's job has the status of Other, that she experiences herself as Other. The results of this study demonstrate instead that all of the women who worked for pay experienced themselves as Subject. Only the two woman who experienced conflict between their roles as wife and mother and their desire for a paid job, and therefore *chose* to stay home, experienced themselves as Object in relation to their work.

Finding Meaning in the Ideals and Goals of the Women's Movement

Twelve of the 13 participants found meaning in the ideals or valued the goals of The Women's Movement. They felt that the Women's Movement had directly affected their personal lives by providing them with an analysis which fit their experience (seven), by teaching them to value their women friends (four) or legitimizing their desires and needs (three). The Women's Movement was also perceived as a catalyst for divorce in three unsatisfactory marriages, and responsible for legal change which drastically affected one woman's life. Generally, the Women's Movement was perceived as motivating women to make

choices regarding relationships, activities and work, and as a reminder that women deserve to have equal rights and to be valued equally. Thus, the large majority of women in this study related positively to the ideology of the Women's Movement, having personally benefited from it and being appreciative of the social, economic, legal changes which have resulted from it. These results may be surprising to traditional thinkers who perceive the Women's Movement to be passe or who believe that feminist ideology has affected only a small minority of women. Further discussion about the women's reaction to feminist and other ideologies will follow in the final section of this chapter.

C. Women's Experience in Context

Factors affecting the negative and positive meanings women give to their experience as women is understood more completely from an analysis of the context of women's experience.

Individual Factors and Meaning

Health

Good health was appreciated by two women, both in their 60s; and poor health contributed to a feeling of powerlessness in two women, both in their 30s. Expectations regarding health for a particular age group undoubtedly affected these women's attitudes toward their own state of health. The issue of health might well be taken as an issue related to individual physiology and to age, given that health care in Canada has been socialized to some degree. This is not true, however, according to Simkin (1979), an Alberta physician who maintains, "Women do not get equal and/or adequate health care" (p. 63). Simkin has examined barriers to women's equality in society and how this effects their health care. She relates the general devaluing of women to the fact that large amounts of money are poured into research on men's diseases (cardiovascular diseases, for example) while much less money is made available for women's diseases. In her own research of 498 female Rheumatoid Arthritis patients she demonstrated that 87% of the patients had gone undiagnosed for 12 years or more (during which time they had presented various symptoms to their doctors) and most of these women

were told by their doctors that they were neurotic. The results verified Simkin's hypothesis that doctors don't listen to women's complaints. She concludes,

> Only when physicians descend to the level of mere human beings, and women are elevated to that same level, can women receive comprehensive health care (p. 70.)

The health care system has also been criticized by feminists for not meeting the needs of women. Penfold (1980) warns that the current stress on health and fitness promotion is seductive but is inadequate because, like the more traditional health care system, it is accessible only to the healthiest and wealthiest. While middle-class women may benefit from these programs, poor, working-class women do not. Ehrenreich (1980) believes that the medical system is not a health care system at all - that it caters to disease rather than health, reinforcing and supporting those industries in society which are disease producing but which benefit powerful men in charge of national and multi-national corporations. Thus, literature which examines the context of women's experience in regards to health and illness makes us aware that health is not just a personal matter, it is also political. It is possible, then, that a woman's experience of poor health may relate to the fact that she has the social status of Other.

Results of this study showed that four participants currently experience severe pre-menstrual and/or menstrual distress (or, in the case of Christine, who has had a hysterectomy, cyclical fatigue and emotional swings). Further, it was shown that social meanings given to women's physiological experiences (i.e., attitudes of physicians encountered directly or indirectly) affects the meaning women give to their distress. Three of the four women in this study reported that the knowledge that their emotional cycling was related to their menstrual cycle and was physiologically or hormonally based was important in helping them to understand that their discomfort was not a neurotic symptom and that it was temporary. In other words, they better coped with their discomfort, knowing its origin. The one woman who failed to associate her pre-menstrual symptoms with physiological changes perceived herself to be weak and neurotic at these times. That accurate information about women's bodies has been largely unavailable, and that the medical profession made judgments about women's experiences which

simply reinforced stereotyped myths about "the nature of woman," has been established in the literature (Daly, 1978; Ehrenreich & English, 1978; O'Brien, 1979; Rothman, 1979; Simkin, 1979). Simkin (1979) writes, "Women have laboured under such misconceptions and untruths (about the nature of their female bodies, as taught by men) for many hundreds of years" (p. 63). The fact that women continue to be subject to unnecessary hysterectomies and then treated as neurotic if they complain of emotional side-effects also reflects a general disinterest in women's problems and a lack of understanding of their experience, according to these experts. Similarly, the lack of provision of safe birth control methods is seen to reflect the low priority given to problems affecting women in medical research. O'Brien (1979) believes that women's reproductive capability has been given little value historically because it is not in the realm of the rational. Today, with developing technology, reproduction is still viewed by patriarchal society as apart from men and as something to be controlled, she explains. Recent research by anthropologists supports the notion that reproductivity separates women and men and relegates women to a baser and, therefore, less valued position (Shirley Ardener, 1975a; Ortner, 1973).

It is also established in the literature that historically women have been blamed for their physiological difficulties (Ehrenreich & English, 1978). It is no wonder, then, that some women (like Marcela) continue to believe they are to blame when they experience dismenorrhea, and judge themselves to be neurotic. That knowledge of female physiology and an understanding of the physiological basis of emotional and physical changes can be helpful to women has been demonstrated in three cases in this study. In a discussion of attribution theory and the menstrual cycle, Unger (1979) reviews research which has investigated the consequences of women's attributing menstrual distress to their physiology. She explains,

> It has been suggested that women who have a salient and credible attribution for their physiological state may be more capable of avoiding the effects of that state than those who cannot find such a reason for their performance. Predictability may benefit performance either by directly reducing perceived stress or by making individuals work harder in order to overcome an expected decrement in performance (pp. 240-241).

This finding lends support, Unger believes, to the research which demonstrates no

relationship between menstruation and actual performance – research which challenges the myth that women who are menstruating can't function effectively. Research such as this is progressive in that it reinforces the concept of women as Subject, because it serves the purpose of demystifying "woman," who has been defined as Other than "man."

The demystifying of female physiology would also appear to have positive effects for women at puberty. Four women (Joan, Mary, Christine, Sally) reported that the onset of menstruation was a more or less difficult time for them, largely because they lacked information about their developing bodies and their sexuality. One woman (Marcela) reported that she couldn't remember when she began menstruating because her adolescence was generally so upsetting to her that she had "blocked it all out." Two women (Theresa and Denise) reported that being prepared for menstruation and told about female sexuality at puberty was helpful to them. In all cases it was the attitudes of the mothers toward their daughters' developing sexuality, the timing and completeness of the information given, and the general degree of openess and communication between mother and daughter that determined whether or not the daughter understood and felt good about her changing body. Peer attitudes and degree of discomfort while menstruating also affected how some of the women experienced themselves at this time. The responsibility for daughters learning about their bodies at puberty seems to fall to mothers, and it would be easy to find fault with mothers who do not prepare their daughters for menstruation or who pass on negative attitudes about menstruation and sex. However, given the historical attitudes of the medical community to women's bodies generally and to girls entering puberty in particular (Mitchinson, 1978), it can be understood that mothers are sometimes carriers of myths, fears and embarassment about female sexuality. In other words, mothers sometimes simply echo the attitudes of society generally – attitudes that they themselves have encountered. Caplan (1981) describes various conflicts between mothers and daughters which arise when the daughter enters puberty – conflicts arising from the mother's fears about her daughter's sexual vulnerability and from her fears of being judged a bad mother if her daughter does not conform to the standards

expected of "nice girls." Sally's conflict with her mother at puberty most vividly demonstrates this phenomenon.

Temperament

The fact that six women reported that their individual temperaments have been an important factor that affected their lives consistently, suggests that certain temperaments may affect the meaning women give to their experiences. For example, being shy and withdrawn in a society which encourages women to be passive and submissive and assigns them the status of Other would have different consequences than would be expected for a tomboy who insists on being active and taking the initiative or for a rebellious personality who is determined to stand up for justice. There are significant differences in the meanings given to being women, in fact, for Mary and Jean (who are shy and withdrawn and have difficulty initiating change) and for Joan, Beret and Theresa (who are tomboys and see themselves as active, determined and/or rebellious). Mary and Jean perceive themselves as largely powerless; Joan, Beret and Theresa perceive themselves as largely powerful. This is not to say that temperament is seen to be a causal factor in behavior. Rather, temperament might be considered one of a number of factors that interact with social expectations, status, etc. to produce a particular effect. Further, it may be that given the social expectations for women in our culture, particular temperaments (such as being shy, timid and withdrawn) may be more vulnerable, and other temperaments (such as energetic, active, determined and rebellious) may be more resistant to pressures to conform to the ideological image of the submissive, subordinate woman. This interpretation is supported by results of a study by Brehony and Geller (1981) who determined that androgynous (active, independent) women perceived themselves as having more internal control and were likely to conform less to social expectations than were stereotypic (passive, dependent) women. It is understood, of course, that temperaments do not exist in isolation and that other factors would also play a part. The point is merely that temperament can be a factor, for some women, in how they react to or cope with their status as Other. Based on her study of personality and situational variables in the prediction of women's life patterns, Stewart (1980) concludes that whereas

situational variables set broad limits on behavior, personality variables predict choice within those limits.

Physical Appearance

Body size and appearance had a major negative effect on the meaning of the experiences of three women (Jean, Beret, and Mary) and a minor negative effect on two women (Joan and Alice). The three women most severely affected were big, fat, or not like their peers in appearance. However, it was not their body size or appearance per se that resulted in the trauma these women experienced. Rather, it was the judgment by others and by themselves that was problematic – the judgment that they were different from the norm or the ideal, and therefore not acceptable. The devastating effect on women of being judged according to an ideal standard of beauty was documented by early writers of the current feminist movement (Embree, 1970; Greer, 1970; Nunes & White, 1973). How the feelings of being unacceptable have pervaded the lives of Jean, Beret and Mary, and how these feelings led to a crippling self-rejection in Jean and an intense self-consciousness in Beret and Mary, has been demonstrated. Comparing themselves to an ideal image of femininity and judging themselves to be inadequate was destructive to their sense of selves. They were Other in that their acceptance of themselves was determined by a standard not of their own making. Further, in failing to measure up to the ideal image of femininity they became a psychological Other in their own eyes. Thus they are Other in two senses: Other in relation to the male population which has formal status and power, and Other in relation to the ideal image of femininity. That the fear and guilt of not achieving a particular body image (and particular feminine behaviors) can be extremely problematic for women has been demonstrated by feminist therapists and reachers who work with women who eat compulsively (Boskind-Lodahl, 1979; LeShan, 1981; Orbach, 1978, 1982; Palmer, 1982). Therapists of women who are overweight, anorexic, or bulimic are helping women to examine how they try to satisfy emotional needs with food and to understand how certain stresses of being female in our culture relate to body image (Leshan, 1981; Orbach, 1978, 1982). The primary goal of such therapy is to assist women to experience themselves as Subject. First they are made conscious

of the messages they received which defined them as Other (both physically and behaviorally) and the particular ways in which they experience themselves as Other. Second, they are taught to meet their emotional needs and express their feelings directly, which results in their learning how to behave and experience themselves as Subject.

Family Relationships and Meaning

The family of origin has long been understood to have tremendous impact on the psychological development and mental health of its members. Investigation of women's relationships to their parents originated with Freud's analysis of the electra complex (criticized above), a process by which a girl realizes she cannot be like her father (because she has no penis) and so adjusts to being like her mother (who also has no penis). A woman who resents her subordinate status is, according to Freudians, suffering from penis envy (Hall & Lindzey, 1978; Juliet Mitchell, 1975). Horney rejected Freud's concept of penis envy as the determining factor in the psychology of women, focusing instead on the social and cultural realities of women's lives which she believes account for their resentments, insecurities, and neurotic needs. (Hall & Lindzey, 1978; Horney, 1967). So strong was Freud's influence that feminist researchers continue to debate his theories and reinterpret his analyses (Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1976; Lerman, 1980; Juliet Mitchell, 1975; Ramas, 1980). Horney's writings, too, continue to be reexamined in the hope of clarifying our understanding of women's psychology (Garrison, 1981; Juliet Mitchell, 1975). At the same time, feminist researchers have begun an exploration of women's relationships to their families, especially to their mothers (Caplan, 1980, 1981; Chodorow, 1978; Dinnerstein, 1976; Flax, 1978; Glastonbury, 1979; Hammer, 1976; Rich, 1976). Fireweed, a feminist quarterly, has devoted one entire issue (12, 1982) to exploring "Blood Relations," and Hirsch has written a review essay on the topic, "Mothers and Daughters" in Signs (1981). Women's relationships to their fathers and other relatives, as well as the effect of particular family dynamics on women, has not been investigated (except for incest cases). Results of this study as regards the effect of different family members and family dynamics on women's experience as women are important in furthering our understanding of women's psychological experience.

Relationships to Mothers

The majority of participants (9/13) had conflicting relationships with their mothers, although the nature of the conflicts experienced by these women were very different, as was the degree of positive or negative feeling. A common feature of all of these conflicting mother/daughter relationships, however, was that they existed within a patriarchal system which had somehow "left its mark" on the mother and/or daughter – a mark which interfered with their relationship. That conflict with mothers arose for five women when they entered puberty has already been discussed. Beret and Denise, though respecting their mothers' intelligence, resourcefulness, strength and determination, both felt rejected by their mothers in another way – Beret because she was a tomboy, and was big, tall and active, unlike her feminine sister; and Denise because she was a daughter and her mother favored the sons. Beret's mother had accepted the dominant male culture's ideal of feminine looking and acting women, and Denise's mother had accepted the dominant male culture's higher valuation of males. Both women felt judged by their mothers to be Other: Denise was Other in that she received less attention from her mother than did her brothers, and Beret was Other in that she received less attention from her mother than did her more feminine sister. Caplan (1981), in her book, Barriers Between Women, describes the kind of mother/daughter conflict experienced by Denise. She does not discuss the kind of conflict experienced by Beret, however. Fortunately for Denise and Beret, they also admired their mothers' strengths and abilities, and benefited from their direct teaching, modelling and encouragement to achieve in the world outside the home. This teaching seems to have served as a buffer against society's expectations that they be submissive and know their *proper place*. Both women experience themselves as capable and determined and have resisted the idea that they should be subordinate. Beret, however, accommodated to her mother's and society's judgment that she was unacceptable because she did not look feminine, and continues to judge herself as such today. In this sense she experiences herself as Other.

Sally's conflict with her mother centres around her resentment of her mother's current interference and dependence and past behavior on the one hand,

and her desire for her mother's love and support on the other. Sally's expectations that her mother be always nurturing and available to her in spite of circumstances which made that impossible reflects the dominant attitude that mothers *should* always put their children first and are to blame when they can't. Sally's mother, meanwhile, suffers severe anxiety when her husband leaves her alone to work on his trapline, having learned so well what society teaches women, which is to be dependent on others for their satisfaction and to gain a sense of identity through their husband and children. Sally's conflict, then, is that she desires a mutually close and supportive relationship with her mother, but at the same time resents that her mother has not always been nurturing and that she has become overly dependent. Caplan (1980, 1981) describes both the phenomenon of daughters resenting that their mothers are not always nurturing the way they're *supposed to be*, and the phenomenon of mothers becoming dependent on their daughters for nurturing. Both situations act as barriers between women, according to Caplan, but these barriers arise from the social definition of women as mothers, not from the individuals. She states:

> Since women are expected to be nurturant, daughters (as well as sons) are angrier and more disappointed when they ask their mothers for help and support and it is not forthcoming, than when this happens with their fathers (1980, p. 8).

Madelaine and Elizabeth suffered a similar conflict in their relationships with their mothers – they didn't get the love and attention they desired because their mothers were physically and emotionally exhausted from caring for many children and coping with additional problems. These mothers were victims of social norms which expected women to make a career of having and raising children. Further, in the cases of Madelaine's and Elizabeth's mothers, at least, the Catholic church forbade them to use birth control and taught them that female suffering was inevitable. Thus, being "good women" resulted in their being continually pregnant. The result for Madelaine (middle child in a family of 13 children) was that there was no time for her and she felt neglected. Elizabeth (eldest in a family of eight children) was neglected, too, but in addition was expected to take resonsibility for the mother role. In spite of this, both women respect their mothers in some sense, Elizabeth because her mother encouraged her to achieve academically, and

Madelaine because she understands the hardships her mother endured and perceives her as a connection to life itself. Jean's conflict with her mother, like that of Madelaine's and Elizabeth's, is that the love and affection she desired was not forthcoming. Her mother, too, was exhausted from eight pregnancies (two of which resulted in miscarriages) and from raising children. In addition she was required to care for an ill husband, manage the farm, and work outside the home, all of which caused much anxiety. Further, Jean felt inadequate compared to her mother, who seemed to her to be so strong, so capable, so all-knowing. She could never be like her mother, she reasoned, so she withdrew from her, feeling insecure, inadequate, and undernourished. Again, this mother was respected, but a multitude of problems and lack of time and energy prevented the formation of a close bond of love. Glastonbury (1979) explained children's perceptions of their poor, overworked and exhausted mothers as such: she is a life force, not a character; she is respected, but not loved.

The conflict Mary feels with her mother seems to arise from a lack of communication about things important to Mary. According to Mary this probably relates to the mother's own stress and unhappiness in her role as a good wife who gave up her own career to marry and have children and live with a husband who was authoritative and oppressive. Prevented in her own life from fulfilling her dreams, Mary's mother apparently looked to Mary to fulfill them for her. Mary tried to oblige but in the process made choices that did not suit her. (Her decision to become a teacher was based on her mother's goal, not her own.) She did appreciate her mother's support, however, in the face of her father's criticisms and in relation to her going to college.

Alice's conflict with her mother was somewhat similar to Mary's in that Alice's mother wanted for her what she did not achieve for herself. However, Alice perceived in her mother conflicting messages as to what Alice should do with her life - her mother told her to be independent and "do things" with her life, but inadvertently taught her to hide her strengths, pretend to be weak and gain power by manipulation. These messages were indicative of the conflict that Alice's mother experienced in relation to her social definition. She desired that her

daughter be the Subject of her life, but could not show her how to do that, for she only knew how to be Subject in private. Publically, she pretended to be Other to accommodate to her husband's and society's expectations. Using Anyon's (1981) theory, then, Alice learned from her mother the public/private discrepancy in accommodation and resistance to the feminine stereotype. She is thankful, however, that her mother desired for her more than the status of Other.

Marcela, too, appreciates that her mother desires for her the status of Subject. Specifically, she appreciates the support she feels from her mother around her career ambitions. Further, she respects her mother's goals and achievements. On the negative side, however, she directly experienced her mother as hostile, punitive and controlling during her puberty. She relates her mother's behavior to her own conflict and frustration, first with a restrictive father and later with a chauvinistic husband who was threatened by her achievements, who drank to soothe his soul and who was loving and attentive to his daughter instead of to her. Caplan (1981) has described mother-daughter conflicts which revolve around competition for the husband's/father's attention, or which involve the mother restricting the daughter's social life at adolescence. Both of these kinds of conflicts appear to have been elements of Marcela's conflict with her mother. In addition, Marcela resents the fact that her mother's anger and frustration (which arose from her struggle to have a business career in a man's world) was vented on her and that she was expected to take over household responsibilities. The common feature of the variety of conflicts experienced by Marcela in relation to her mother is that social expectations and the lower valuation of women interfered with the development of a satisfying relationship. Thus it was with all nine cases in which the daughters experienced their relationships with their mothers as conflicting. The daughters bore the mark of their mothers' difficulties with their social definition or gender role, and/or the mothers were judged by their daughters to be less than ideal because they failed to meet society's standards. The common status of mothers and daughters as Other, interfered with the relationships between them.

Two participants, Joan and Christine, who experienced their relationships to their mothers as primarily negative, also bore the consequences of their mothers, difficulties. This time, however, there were no perceived redeeming aspects to the relationships. For Joan there was little connection with her mother, initially because she did not live with her and learned not to depend on her for her emotional needs, and later because they did not share similar interests and desires. Joan disassociated herself from her mother because she did not want to be what she judged her mother to be (Other in relation to men who were Subject) and because her mother judged her to be different from the feminine ideal (Other). Joan decided that she would rather be Subject, like men. Caplan (1980) describes the kind of reaction Joan has to her mother – the dynamic of the daughter wanting to be different from her mother whom she judges to have an empty and unsatisfying life. In rejecting the status of Other for herself, the daughter rejects the mother who has accepted this status. Like Joan, Christine perceived that her mother expected her to repeat the pattern of her own life – in this case a life of poverty, drudgery and abuse. In addition, however, Christine was expected to protect her mother and nurture her in a way that Christine, herself, had never been nurtured. Further, she was expected to assume adult responsibility for household tasks and caring for her younger siblings. Christine's experience was much like Elizabeth's except that Christine was not encouraged to achieve at school. Caplan (1981) writes that in families in which incest occurs, one frequently finds a mother–daughter role reversal, where the mother is unable to nurture and turns to her daughter for nurturing. These daughters are also expected to take responsibility for household tasks and for their siblings. The findings of Herman and Hirschman (1977) support this picture. Further, they found that daughters are frequently more angry toward their mothers than toward their fathers, blaming their mothers for failing to protect them and siding with their more powerful fathers against their weak and inadequate mothers. This, indeed, was the case for both Elizabeth and Christine. (This phenomenon was also noted in Sally's relationships with her parents, though she was not an incest victim.) However, contrary to the commonly held notion that daughters become incest victims

because their mothers are sexually frigid and consciously or unconsciously encourage the incest, Caplan (1981) writes that mothers are often so intensely insecure and fearful themselves that they are totally submerged in their own inner struggles. The mother's status and psychological experience as Other, if extreme enough, can result in her being unable to offer her daughter anything but the expectation that she, too, be Other. Herman and Hirschman (1977) believe that in the final stages of therapy with incest victims, after anger toward the mother has been fully expressed, consciousness-raising as to women's status as Other in the family and community will help women to express their repressed anger toward their fathers. Leidig's (1980) and my own work with incest victims verifies that this is the usual process in therapy.

In sharp contrast, two participants (Theresa and Heidi) experienced their relationships with their mothers as primarily positive. Theresa values above all that her mother taught her to respect herself as a woman, and simultaneously acted on her belief that women were equal to men by standing up to her chauvinistic husband and thereby modelling her own strength of character. Theresa learned from her mother, by word and deed, that women were not Other and that they should fight those who assume they are. Heidi respects that her mother was both hard-working and loving in spite of being ill and believes that her fine upbringing has given her the strength to cope with her own marriage problems. It appears that in spite of difficult circumstances both of these mothers were respected and loved because they could demonstrate their love to their daughters, taught their daughters to respect themselves, and themselves led their lives in a way their daughters could respect.

Baker's (1975) research on women's role models is helpful in our understanding of these results. She found that women experienced two kinds of role models, usually females and often their mothers. Positive models encouraged the women, and the women in turn admired and attempted to emulate them. Negative models were women perceived to be in an unfavorable position, whose mistakes should be avoided. Women who had a positive model could perceive how to be successful, whereas women who had a negative model could only see

what they wanted to avoid. They had the difficult job of having to find their own way to success and having to invent their own coping mechanisms. According to Baker (1975), overcoming the handicap of having a negative role model requires a great deal of emotional energy and these women are likely to feel atypical or deviant. This suggests that women who have a positive role model have an easier time than women who do not. Baker concludes:

> There was some indication that this continual family support was essential to counteract other pressures from popular stereotypes, casual acquaintences and the media (p.7).

Relationships With Fathers

As was reported, participants' relationships with fathers formed a very different pattern than with mothers. Whereas conflict to varying degrees typified the large majority of relationships with mothers, relationships with fathers were more varied and no single experience predominated. Four women (Denise, Beret, Heidi and Sally) experienced their relationships with their fathers as primarily positive, because they perceived their fathers to be loving and supportive toward them and worthy of their respect. Four women (Marcela, Jean, Alice and Theresa) experienced their relationships with their fathers as conflicting. In these relationships the father was perceived to be loving or supportive and this was considered positive. The negative aspect of the relationship for Marcela was that her father seemed irresponsible and incapable of acting at times. The conflict arose for Jean because her father's severe illness left her frightened and insecure. Theresa and Alice spoke much less of their fathers than they did of their mothers. Both fathers seem to have assumed a stereotypic masculine role in the family and almost appear to be backdrops against which the daughters learned (differently) from their mothers how to "cope with men." Both woman spoke of their fathers as having had greater impact on them than did their mothers. The negative aspect to these two relationships seems to be the limited definitions these men had of their daughters and their limited aspirations for them. This aspect changed for Alice in later years, however. She describes how, at age 30 when she decided to go into business for herself, her father was very supportive.

Three women (Christine, Elizabeth and Mary) experienced their relationships with their fathers as primarily negative. That Christine's and Elizabeth's experiences as incest victims continued to be extremely damaging to them for years after they left home has already been discussed. Experts write that relationships between incestuous fathers and their daughters are not "glaringly abnormal," but rather are intensifications of the acceptable power structure of a patriarchal family – an abuse of his rightful power (Caplan, 1981; Herman & Hirschman, 1977; MacFarlane, 1978). In Caplan's words, "the father has the power in the household, and the mother and other females attempt to meet his demands" (1981, p.79). The father, himself often an abused or neglected child, is typically emotionally needy and immature. He makes unreasonable demands and expects his wife and especially his daughter (who is even less his equal and therefore less threatening) to meet them. Fearing total rejection (she is often threatened) she complies. Fathers confronted with their behavior are often surprised to learn they have committed a crime, believing that sexual access to their daughters is a parental right (Rush, 1980). Mary's father did not exploit her the way Christine and Elizabeth were exploited. However, she felt oppressed by her father's rigid behavior, values and attitudes, his criticisms and restrictions. She continues today to feel the effects of his former judgments, and to be concerned for her mother's deteriorating mental health and lack of happiness in the marriage. She feels badly about judging him harshly, but finds few redeeming aspects in their relationship. Finally, two participants (Joan and Madelaine) hardly mentioned their fathers at all. When responding to the question, "What do you value in your life?" Joan did not refer to either parent and Madelaine referred only to her mother. Relationships with their fathers (Joan's was a step-father) for these two women appeared to be important only in terms of a deficiency. The fathers' lack of input is not resented the way the mother's lack generally is, however.

Generalizations about the nature of mother/daughter and father/daughter relationships cannot be drawn on the basis of 13 cases. However, it is possible here to describe what appear to be key issues in these relationships, as they are understood from the daughters' points-of-view. The daughters seem to have

judged relationships with both parents as positive if they experienced the parent as loving, as supportive of their interests or goals, and as people to be respected. If one or two of these aspects was missing as a result of either personal or situational variables, the relationship was experienced as conflicting. If all aspects were missing the relationship was experienced as negative. An additional factor in the relationships was the effect on the parent of being female or male in a society which differentiates appropriate behavior for the sexes, which places a higher value on and gives more formal power to males, and which places a lower value on and gives no formal power to females. The differentiation of behaviors and higher valuation of males than females affected the daughters as well. As a result, it appears that some form of conflict, rejection or judgment was structured into the majority (11/13) of mother/daughter relationships. Their mutual social status as Other appears to have been a destructive element in the relationships. Hammer's (1975) work on mother/daughter relationships supports this finding. She outlines the conflicts, ambivalences and double messages that are characteristics of many mother/daughter relationships. She states: "Daughters identify with their mothers, and thus these daughters absorbed Mom's confusion about herself" (p. 29). Father/daughter relationships were affected by the higher valuation of males and differential gender expectations which gave the men formal power and the "choice" of being loving and supportive, dictatorial and oppressive, or withdrawn from family interaction. Having the love and support from and respect for their fathers was a major positive element in the lives of four women. Conversely the two conflicting and three negative relationships with fathers also had a major impact on those womens' lives. There appears to be less blame put on fathers who are judged to be inadequate, however. That the differential expectations on mothers and fathers to be nurturing does affect women's judgments of these relationships is supported by the finding that incest victims often initially blame their mother for not protecting them, more than they blame their fathers (Leidig, 1980). It appears also that immediate harsh circumstances (large families, poverty, illness, etc.) had a greater negative effect on mother/daughter relationships than on father/daughter relationships. Again, the literature supports this interpretation.

Mothers are judged more harshly than are fathers, when circumstances prevent them from being nurturing (Caplan, 1980).

Family Dynamics

Relationships between their parents had an effect on the women, just as did the women's relationships to each parent. Relationships between parents who were mutually loving and respectful had a positive effect on the self-concept of three women (Beret, Heidi and Denise) insofar as they felt themselves to also be loving, respectful and worthy of respect. However, having parents who are mutually loving and respectful is no guarantee that a woman will find the same kind of relationship in her marriage. Heidi, in fact, found herself married to a man who was extremely abusive to her. Nevertheless, she attributes her strength to survive this marriage to her upbringing. Theresa witnessed her mother refusing to be submissive to her father and denouncing his authoritative attitudes. This had a positive effect on Theresa, she thinks, because she finds it a challenge to defend herself. A dominant father/submissive mother relationship had a negative effect on three women. Alice learned to think of herself as weak and needing to play at being feminine with men (the way she saw her mother pretend with her father), Mary has difficulty asserting herself in her marriage and tends to submit to her husband's desires (as did her mother), and Joan feels guilty when she asserts herself in her marriage (her mother preferred a subordinate role, she thinks). Emotional distance between parents had a negative effect on four women (Elizabeth, Christine, Marcela and Madelaine) who have experienced problems with emotional insecurity. The insecurity was established in childhood and has continued to have a negative effect on these women throughout adulthood. That emotional distance between parents is typical in families where incest occurs is established in the literature (Caplan, 1981; Chapman & Gates, 1978; Rush, 1980). The effect on women of emotional distance between parents has not been studied generally, however. The actual separation of Sally's parents when she was a young child was negative in that it resulted in her being fearful of causing another separation if she "caused trouble." Her parents' temporary separations are problematic for her today because of her mother's dependence on her for nurturing and support. While

conclusions about the various types of relationships between parents on daughters cannot be drawn from this study, the results suggest that it is important to look at the effect of parental relationships on daughters (and sons). Little or no research has been done on this topic, however, except in the case of families with severe psychological problems.

Daughters' positions in the family relative to their siblings was also an important element in the lives of some participants. Being the eldest daughter in a large family and therefore being expected to assume responsibility for household duties and child care was traumatic for Elizabeth and Christine. That sexual abuse often goes hand-in-hand with this type of exploitation of daughters was explained above. Herman and Hirschman (1977) also found evidence that eldest daughters are most frequently the victims of father/daughter incest. There is statistical evidence demonstrating that girls who are runaways or who become prostitutes and/or heavy drug users typically come from this kind of sexually and physically exploitive environment (Barry, 1979; MacFarlane, 1978; Rush, 1980). This was not the fate of Elizabeth and Christine, although both women use prescription drugs to control their depression. Being the middle child in a large and poor family was a negative experience for two women. Madelaine and Jean suffered from emotional neglect, they thought, and as a result felt extremely insecure and anxious. Large family size in conjunction with poverty has been demonstrated to have a negative effect on the emotional security of children. Birth order studies have described the middle child as one who "misses" attention and direction in the family. [16] Sex of siblings was seen to be an important factor for two participants: being the only girl with four brothers was negative for Jean, and being the eldest of three sisters was positive for Theresa. However, attending to situational factors gives a much deeper understanding of why this was so. Both Jean and Theresa lived on farms where seasonal work often required that various family members assist the father outside. If the family had boys and girls, boys were expected to help their fathers

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[16]First borns are usually described as high-achieving and responsible children, but the negative results for daughters of being expected to assume adult responsibilities, which results in their exploitation and abuse, is not discussed in literature dealing with the effects of birth order. Also missing in birth order theory is an examination of the interaction of birth order with family size and with situational variables such as poverty, illness, etc.

and achieved a higher status for doing so. If the family had only girls, the girls worked with their fathers and achieved status for doing a "man's job." Thus, circumstances of farm life interacted with sibling composition and gender to give Theresa a positive experience and Jean a negative one. To the author's knowledge, this aspect of family dynamics has yet to be explored in research.

Relationships to Relatives Other than Mother or Father

In this study grandmothers and aunts (and one older female cousin) were seen to have the most intense effect (both positive and negative) and uncles and grandfathers had a lesser effect. Women who experienced extended family members as supportive either in addition to or in place of parental support, seemed to have an advantage over women who were without extended family support or who experienced extended family members as non-supportive. Baker's (1975) research on role models (discussed above) supports this interpretation.

Social Factors and Meaning

Family's Status in the Community

Both financial and social status of their family of origin in the community were seen to have tremendous impact on the majority of the participants. In total, eight women reported that they had either benefited or been disadvantaged by their family's social and/or financial status in the community.[17] Rarely in psychological research is social and financial status investigated for its relevance to psychological experience. Rather, this dimension is "controlled for" – only subjects of the same status are compared – so that psychological dimensions remain "uncontaminated" (Sherif, 1979a). Sociological research, on the other hand, examines socio-economic status, but has traditionally viewed the psychological dimension as simply a reflection of this status and has failed to account for the psyche as an active and reactive force. Further, according to feminist sociologists, women are consistently treated as adjuncts to men (as Other) in stratification theory (Acker, 1973; Daniels, 1975; Eichler, 1980; Lofland, 1975; Oakley, 1974). Some feminist psychologists and sociologists, however, aware of the limitations of

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[17]That five women did not report the effect on them of their family's status does not mean, however, that there was no significant effect; it means only that for some reason they did not discuss it. However, that her family's status undoubtedly had a powerful effect on Sally, for example, can be surmised from details in her case study.

traditional research, are attempting to understand the links between women's social and financial status and their psychological experience.[18] In this study, the results show that social and financial status sometimes goes hand-in-hand in terms of the effect they have on individuals. Beret, for example, felt she had benefited from her family's social and financial status, while Jean felt that she had suffered both from being poor and from being a social "outcast." In these two cases the concept of socio-economic status could be successfully applied. However, this is not the case for all of the women. Denise felt that in spite of being poor, her family had respect because her parents valued education and were thinking, self-educated, responsible people. Heidi's family, too, was poor but her family's social status had nothing to do with this. Rather, it was elevated or reduced, in relation to the government in power. Similarly, Mary's family's social status related to her minority group status which operated independently of their changing financial status. Elizabeth's family did not suffer financially but suffered socially because her father was the town alcoholic. Christine did not mention social status at all, but was very much aware of how being poor affected her. Social status was not mentioned by Alice either, although she was aware that her family's financial security benefited her. For most of the women in this study, then, use of the concept of socio-economic status would be more likely to distort than to elucidate the meaning of the women's experience to them.

Friends

Having close friends who were understanding and supportive or belonging to a group of peers was reported by five women to have been a positive feature of their childhood which affected their attitudes about themselves as women. Not belonging to a group of peers or feeling conflict about their peer group affected three women negatively in their childhoods. Thus, almost two-thirds of the women in this study were significantly affected by the presence, absence or nature of

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[18]Lillian William's (1976) study, Black Women and Self-Image, in which she uses a phenomenological-existential case history approach, is an example. Numerous other studies investigating the experiences of black and other minority status women exist which take social and financial status into account. The need for such studies became apparent when it was understood that concepts which fit the experience of white, middle-class, financially secure women did not make sense when applied to women of different backgrounds.

childhood friendships. Literature in the child development area of psychology has long recognized the effect of peers on children, especially during adolescence (John Mitchell, 1974, 1975; White & Speisman, 1977). There has been some debate about the nature of female peer groups versus male peer groups since Lionel Tiger (1969) put forward his theory of male bonding. The long term effects of female friendships and peer interactions during childhood have yet to be investigated, however. The results of this study suggest that women's friendships, both past and current, warrant investigation.

Social Norms and Generational Cohort

Social norms and values prevalent at a particular point in time in a particular place affected the women's experience and the meaning they gave to this experience. Generally, the participants experienced as significant, expectations regarding education, work, marriage, child care and maternal love. More specifically, the women who were expected to get an education were told to do so because then they could better contribute to society (1920s and 1930s) or because they could achieve independence, gain a higher status, postpone marriage or make a better marriage (1950s and 1960s). Girls who were not able to get an education were expected to work to earn their dowries (1940s, Germany), or to support themselves and/or their families (1950s and 1960s). Over-riding the expectations that they would work or be educated, however, was the expectation that they would sooner or later marry. The two women who have never married (Alice and Jean) still feel pressure to marry (1970s and 1980s) in spite of the fact that they are educated, self-supporting and have achieved successful careers. Further, they feel that they are judged to be failures as women because they are not married. The women who were living single lives (Sally, Christine, Elizabeth) having been divorced or widowed, did not report experiencing the same pressure from others to marry as did the women who had never married. Thus, while expectations around education and work varied, all the women in different times and places received the message that they *should be married*, or that marriage was inevitable. Marriage, they learned, was a *normal* if not an *ideal* state. That the *institution* of marriage caused the majority of women serious problems has

already been discussed, and the structural problems of marriage, as determined in the literature, have been examined. Also evidenced in the literature is the idea that marriage is not considered optional for women (Bem & Bem, 1971; Bernard, 1973a; Fransella & Frost, 1977; Rossi, 1972; Safilios-Rothschild, 1977).

Expectations that women *should* stay home and care for their children (this is ideal) and that they *naturally* feel nurturing toward their children (this is normal) were experienced. Whether or not the expectation resulted in conflict or anxiety for the individual women depended on (a) personality or temperament, (b) past experience and (c) present circumstance. While Beret, Denise and Heidi accepted that it was their *proper place* to stay home with their children and perceived themselves as *naturally* loving children, circumstances required that they work outside of their homes. Therefore, they did not limit their activities to nurturing their children and maintaining their households. Madelaine, Joan and Christine, all of whom had unhappy childhoods initially, tried to meet the expectation that they *should* make a full-time career of mothering. All were frustrated by the limitation this involved. Joan and Christine both became depressed and eventually engaged in work and activities outside their homes. Madelaine eventually "adjusted" to the roles of mother and wife in order to make peace with her husband. She maintains she is content now but there is evidence that she suffers from low self-esteem. Mary is still attempting to "adjust" to the roles of wife and mother and continues to experience conflict, depression and a sense of powerlessness. Worse for her, however, would be the guilt she would suffer if she did not make this sacrifice for her children and family.

The idea that women *naturally* love their children may also suit some women but be problematic for others. This expectation was reinforcing to Beret, Denise and Heidi, who found that loving children came easily to them. However, it was at various times a burden to Madelaine who felt emotionally neglected herself and doesn't feel an intense love toward her children, to Christine who was both emotionally neglected and sexually abused as a child and who played the role of her mother's protector, to Joan who became depressed at home with her children and preferred to be working outside of the home, to Mary who tried to do

free-lance work while caring for her two small children and running her home and became exhausted and depressed, and to Sally who was only a child of 15 herself when she had her baby. To these five women, then, nurturing has for various reasons not come easily. As was demonstrated in the case studies, the effect on these women of their not meeting the expectation to be continually nurturing was that they felt conflict and guilt, became depressed and/or questioned their worthiness. Sally at one point felt so incapable of caring for her daughter and so misunderstood and judged by professionals that she considered giving her up for adoption. The conflict generally experienced by women who assume the role of mother has already been discussed in the previous section where the pertinent literature was reviewed. The guilt experienced by women who do not meet the ideal image of a mother has also been the subject of much research (Bernard, 1974; Ehrenreich & English, 1978; Janeway, 1974; Miller, 1976; Unger, 1979; Williams, 1977). Bernard relates mothers' guilt to the way motherhood has been institutionalized in society. She states:

> Because of the demands we make, because we set impossibly high standards, our way of institutionalizing motherhood breeds guilt into the very force of a woman's character. She blames herself for every deviation from the model (1974, p.79).

So strong is the ideology of motherhood that it may even, as is demonstrated in the case of Denise, take precedence over reality such that reality is denied and the ideology is supported. According to Bernard (1974), the idealization of motherhood to the extent that reality is denied does not happen by chance; it is purposely encouraged, supposedly for the benefit of the child and to the detriment of women. She cites Mitscherleck (1968) to demonstrate the dominant culture's rationale for the idealization of motherhood.

> In the interest of the survival of the species the mother-child relationship has to be buttressed by social regulation, (but).... this is often not sufficient, and .... deficiencies have therefore to be covered up by idealization (p. 85)

Bernard explains the repercussions on women, children and society, generally, of falsely idealizing motherhood, and presents a proposal for structural changes in the institution of motherhood which takes into account, rather than negates reality.

Professionals and Institutional Policies

The effect on the participants of various professionals and/or institutional policies and practices (educational, medical, therapeutic, religious, legal and business) was documented. Individuals from all of the above professions were experienced as having both positive and negative effects on the women who sought out their services. Further, there were approximately the same number of negative experiences reported as positive regarding women's encounters with teachers, doctors, therapists, church officials, lawyers and employers. We can conclude, therefore, that in the experience of the participants, their significant encounters with professionals were just as likely to be negative as positive. This finding is in keeping with the results of a study by Weiss (1980) which demonstrated that 41% of the women surveyed had negative feelings toward their physicians' behavior, while 43% had positive feelings. According to the reports of the participants in this study, the positive experiences generally involved the woman feeling understood and respected and receiving helpful information and support. The negative experiences involved the women not being understood, being judged, humiliated or disrespected, and being hindered or sexually abused rather than helped. Gender of the professional was not a factor in determining whether the encounter was experienced positively or negatively, when the issue was whether or not the professional was understanding, supportive or helpful. However, in every case in which the woman felt humiliated or was sexually abused, the professional was a male. This finding is in keeping with the widely reported evidence that attitudes and acts of violence toward women are typically perpetrated by males. Men "get away with" this sort of behavior, according to experts, because they have the advantage of having greater public power and their aggressive behavior is socially sanctioned (Becker & Abel, 1978). As regards the medical profession, Sherwin (1979) explains in an article entitled, "The Implications of a Sexist Culture on the Doctor-Patient Relationship," that doctors are generally taught to assume that patients are weak, helpless and unable to think rationally, so doctors are required to behave paternalistically. The cultural stereotyping and devaluing of women compounds the disrespect male doctors have for female

patients, she maintains, the result of which often is "bad medicine."

Policies of institutions (educational, medical, church, business, government) that were reported to have had significant impact were all experienced as negative, with the exception of one woman having benefited from a legal change in the status of women. It cannot be concluded from this that only one positive experience with policy occurred in the lives of 13 women. It can only be said that in regards to the women's discussion of policy affecting their lives as women, only one positive experience was discussed and numerous negative experiences were discussed. However, this finding is in keeping with theoretical constructs which demonstrate that except for changes in our institutions which have come about through pressure from feminist groups, policies generally reflect institutionalized sexism (Unger, 1979) or a double standard in the social structure (Eichler, 1980). Further, that these policies are counter-productive to women's participation in society is supported.

Cultural/Political Factors and Meaning

Geophysical Setting

The effect of living in a rural setting was considered significant by six women in the study. Four women experienced country living as positive in that it provided them with particular freedoms and opportunities; one woman experienced country living with mixed feelings; and one woman experienced country living as negative in that it was isolating, restricted her development and reinforced her insecurities. Finally, one woman who grew up in the country, did not refer to this fact as significant. Of course it was not country living alone that was significant, either positively or negatively. Rather, it was country living combined with other factors such as relationships with parents, sex of siblings, poverty, illness, and the meaning of the woman's experience in the rural setting that made this factor significant or not. Thus, if the first lesson to be learned here is that it is necessary to explore the geophysical setting in-depth in order to understand its significance, the second lesson is that geophysical setting must be explored as only one of a number of factors which interact to give rise to a particular meaning. While psychologists rarely attend to information this broad in

scope (except perhaps to sometimes "control for it") social anthropologists and historians begin with such information as a background for understanding the people they wish to study. The study of psychological experience could benefit, it appears, from interactions with the disciplines of anthropology and history.

Cultural Differences

Cultural differences as a result of belonging to an ethnic minority or being an ethnic immigrant appear to have been a significant factor in the lives of five participants. The insecurity Mary developed in relation to her family's acceptance of the dominant WASP culture and its devaluing of her Hispanic origin is a classic case of the self-denigration experienced by minority status members.[19] In contrast, Marcela's recapturing and valuing of her Hungarian and Slovak ethnic culture (which her father tried to negate) has been to her a source of strength, and continues to be central to her academic and political activities. Her experience is an example of the more recent phenomenon, popularized by Arthur Hailey and his book, Roots, in which people are actively seeking out their histories and taking pride in their differences. We can only speculate on Sally's lack of direct comment about her Metis heritage. It could be that she isn't conscious of how her status affected her, or that she deliberately avoided the topic for any number of reasons, or that she did not make a connection between the initial research question and this dimension of her experience. The debate in leftist circles over which status, class or sex, takes precedence in determining the treatment of a person is considered here to be irrelevant. Instead of arguing which dimension of experience is more important, I would argue that for some women, class (or race) is also an important factor to be understood. Further, I would argue that any researcher who neglected to take class or race into account would be as negligent as one who neglected to take sex and gender into account. Some feminist researchers are taking both race and sex into account (Almquist, 1977, 1979; Lindsay, 1979; Stone, 1979) and some are looking at both class and sex (Anyon, 1980; Hartmann, 1981; Oakley, 1974).

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[19]This phenomenon has been widely evidenced among minority status groups including blacks, Jews, Italians, and women (Allport, 1958; Hacker, 1951; Myrdal, 1944).

Being an immigrant to Canada significantly affected the lives of three women. The two women (Mary and Elizabeth) who immigrated from the United States (and who, therefore, did not have to learn a new language) were less affected by their immigration than was Heidi, who immigrated from Germany and did not know the English language. Also affecting Heidi's immigrant experience was the fact that she lacked a higher education and was forced to work at low-paying factory jobs under poor working conditions, an experience common to immigrant women. Being an immigrant and not having family to turn to made Heidi's escape from her battering husband all the more difficult. That immigration has particular effects on women is now being demonstrated by feminist researchers whose work focuses specifically on the experiences of immigrant women (Ewen, 1980; Glenn, 1980; Hirata, 1979 Mathews, 1977). Mathews (1977) claims that migration theory has traditionally not investigated women's experience as migrants. Migrant wives have been like the urban women Lofland (1975) described, "simply there," part of the background against which the action is perceived. In her research, Mathews takes Smith's (1974) advice and begins from the point of view of women. Recognizing the importance of this new area of research, the Canadian journal, Resources for Feminist Research devoted an entire volume (Roberts & Ramkhalawansingh, Eds., 1979) to issues concerning immigrant and ethnic women.

Political/Economic Forces

Six women reported that political/economic forces including the 1930s depression, World War II and the Vietnam War affected their lives significantly. Beret (whose family was financially secure) felt untouched by the depression. She actually benefited from World War II, in that due to a teacher shortage she was needed to teach school, and therefore allowed to carry on with her career in spite of being a married woman with children. For the other five women the effects were negative. Because of the depression Denise was unable to continue her education as originally planned and Heidi's education was limited because of circumstances arising from World War II. In addition, as a direct result of World War II Heidi became a German refugee, forcefully displaced from her Czechoslovakian homeland; and Denise became a widow. Elizabeth suffered great

emotional stress in relation to her nursing experiences in Vietnam, which contributed to her severe depression and led to her eventual politicization and alienation from her church. Jean and Mary suffered emotionally as children due in part to the harsh wartime circumstances of their parents' lives.

The current threat of nuclear disaster was reported by three women (Elizabeth, Jean and Mary) – the same three who suffered emotionally from the effects of Vietnam and World War II – as having the effect of making them feel powerless. The effect on people of political/economic forces such as depression and war is widely studied by sociologists and historians, not by psychologists. Psychologists have become involved in treating male veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, however. Results of this study demonstrate the importance of understanding the effect of war on women as well. Only feminist sociologists and historians have begun to examine the experiences of women in this respect.

Social/Political Ideology

Ideology is used here to describe ideas and images which are learned directly through religion and education, experienced in the legal, medical, social structures of society, read in books, magazines and papers, and transmitted in the form of images in movies, on radios, records and television. Smith (1975) defines ideology as follows:

> The concept of ideology here focuses on social forms of consciousness (the ways in which people think and talk with one another) which originate outside the actual working relations of people going about their everyday business and are imposed upon them (p. 355).

Its purpose, she explains, is to organize the social relations of individuals and to order their consciousness. She states:

> The ideas and images are a pervasive and fundamental mode which serve to organize, order and control the social relations, the working practices, the ideals and objectives, of individual members of the society (p. 356).

It is also the belief of Smith (1975) that women have been largely excluded from the production of ideology and that ideology, therefore, represents almost exclusively the perspectives and interests of men. She states:

> Women have historically and in the present been excluded from the production of the forms of thought, images, and symbols in which their experience and social relations are expressed and ordered.... Those who occupy the positions from which ideologies are produced and controlled are almost exclusively men. It is therefore their perspectives and interests which are represented (pp. 353-354).

It is from this position that I will examine women's reaction to and consciousness of patriarchal, democratic and feminist ideology.

All of the participants were conscious of the manifestations of patriarchal ideology in terms of the greater power of men in the public sphere, and/or the restriction of women's activities and choices and/or the lack of recognition and valuing of women's contributions to society. Further, all of the participants rejected either the ideology of patriarchy (the idea of male supremacy and female subordination) or the status quo under a patriarchal system. In some senses, then, all of the participants actively rejected their status as Other and experienced themselves as Subject. However, consciousness of the link between ideology and its manifestations in social structures, attitudes, norms, relationships and self-concept differed. For example, while Joan makes a connection between male dominance and female subordination in both public and domestic spheres, she does not relate this to the differential valuing of males and females generally. Thus, Joan rejects her formal status as Other and asserts herself as Subject in this sense. Beret, Heidi, and Denise, on the other hand, speak of the differential valuing of males and females, but do not relate this to the separation of the sexes or to greater male public power. They value the traditional work done by themselves and other women, and experience themselves as Subject in this sense. Sally (who has a grade eight education) recognizes that the basis for women's differential treatment is their biological difference from males and rejects that this is a legitimate basis for limiting women's choices and opportunities. This recognition, which comes totally from Sally's experience, is the basic premise from which renowned intellectuals such as Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill, Simone deBeauvoir, and Juliet Mitchell developed their analyses of women's oppression. Mary (who has two university degrees), also recognizes women's biological difference from males as the basis for their differential treatment. However, unlike Sally she accepts this as the fate of women who wish to have children. Formal education obviously does

not guarantee greater consciousness of women's condition. In fact Sally, who has survived great tragedy, in some ways appears to experience herself as Subject to a greater degree than does Mary, who generally feels powerless and a victim of fate. [20] Bem and Bem (1971) explained that the ideas of the proper subordination and limitation of women's sphere originated from patriarchal religion and is powerful because the ideology is nonconscious. Lipman-Blumen (1972) believes that this ideology is largely unconscious because it is implicit rather than explicit. She explains:

> (The ideas are) powerful systems of belief which shape the destiny of women in ways never imagined by Freud, are transmitted implicitly rather than explicitly; they usually guide the behavior of women silently and without their being consciously aware of it (p. 34).

Smith (1974, 1975, 1977b, 1979a) has made us conscious of how women have been kept in their place through ideology - ideology created in academic structures as well in the broader culture. Recent research has demonstrated, however, that whereas men's ideas of the sex stereotypes have not changed, women's ideas have changed in the past decade (Percival & Percival, 1979). In this study there are obvious differences among the participants in degree and kind of consciousness of patriarchal ideology. It appears that level of consciousness may be related to experience, and to the timing and relevance of information received (which may or may not be in the realm of formal education). Consider the difference in Joan's and Christine's consciousness of limitations for women in the real estate business. Christine, who had entered the business only recently, was thrilled with the sense of equality she experienced selling residential real estate. Joan, who had several years of experience and success in residential real estate and wanted to move into commercial real estate was aware of the barriers women faced who wanted to progress in the business. Neither woman experienced herself as a psychological Other, however. As to the effect of timing and relevance of information received, consider the discussions of Jean, Mary and Elizabeth, who explained that feminist literature provided them with an analysis which fit or made sense of their experience at a particular time in their lives. Their

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[20]Education may, however, have had an effect on Mary's greater consciousness regarding her ethnic minority status.

new consciousness gave them a sense of themselves as Subject, whereas previously they had experienced themselves as Other. For Beret, her interview for this study was a timely experience in that it focused her thinking on particular aspects of her life, and exposed her to a perspective (women's point of view) she had not previously considered. Her new consciousness helped her to more deeply understand the difficulties women experience as a result of having the status of Other, and to more deeply appreciate their struggles to be Subject. Thus, we see that consciousness of patriarchal ideology and its manifestations does change and that women's experience of themselves can change, too, with a change in consciousness. In her interview, Denise discussed the change in her own consciousness and self-concept. She explains that ten years ago she did not understand or perceive sexism, being too busy with her own struggles to reflect on her experiences. Rather, she assumed that everyone thought that women were equal to men the way her parents had. When she began to understand what sexism was, she began to see it all around her, and began to actively challenge it. She also began to be aware that it was important to consider her own needs and not always put the needs of others first. In these two senses, then, she increased her experience of herself as Subject. Consciousness of women's subordination under patriarchy is not enough, in and of itself, however, to guarantee women an easier life, as is seen in the cases of Marcela and Jean. Both women are highly conscious of the effects of patriarchal ideology on women's lives, and yet both are struggling at a personal level with emotional insecurities and with aspects of the feminine image which they internalized at earlier times. Thus, while consciousness of patriarchal ideology can encourage a woman's experiencing of herself as Subject, she may continue at some levels to experience herself as Other.

Women's negative identification as women has been demonstrated in the literature to be evident of women's struggle under patriarchal ideology. Hacker (1951) and Woolsey-Toews (1975) maintain that women's self-denigration and devaluation of other women relates to their identification of themselves or other women with their subordination and devaluation in society. Indicative of their self-denigration were Beret's and Madelaine's remarks prior to the interview that

they didn't think they had much of value to say, and Sally's remark at the end of the interview that she felt she hadn't contributed anything worthwhile. Indicative of their disassociation from the patriarchal definition of what women are *supposed to be* were Joan's and Alice's statements that they did not think of themselves as women, but as persons. Close examination of what was meant by this revealed that Joan did not consider herself to be like the "feminine" image of a woman who was weak, passive and subordinate. By thinking of herself as a person, she was rejecting the image of women as Other. Alice, though seeing herself as traditionally feminine, defines herself according to what she has done (study, teach, manage a business) which has nothing to do with being female or male, she believes. Further, she has not become "all those things I was *supposed* to be," i.e., a wife and mother. By thinking of herself as a person she has rejected the roles of wife and mother which limit women's lives and thus assume their Otherness.

Democratic ideology was alluded to in reference to education and work by the participants. Belief in equal opportunity (which was assumed would result in social equality) or career opportunity seemed to be a motivating force for seven women who had been encouraged by their parents or others to be educated. However, for the three women who had not been encouraged to achieve at school, the idea of equal opportunity reinforced their perceptions of themselves as inadequate – they saw themselves as lacking motivation.[21] Thus, democratic ideology seemed to work positively for those who received support and encouragement to gain an education, but worked negatively for those who lacked support and encouragement from others. That there are real restrictions to equal opportunity as regards education, and that these restrictions can relate to gender as well as to other factors was discussed by two women. As regards equal opportunity in jobs or careers we see from the discussions of three women (Christine, Alice, Denise) that their own success led them to assume that the notion of social equality was at work. Two of these women (Alice, Denise) assumed that this notion is also operating for others. A fourth woman (Joan) believes that social

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[21] The author has noted that this criticism of themselves as lacking motivation is also common to the women in her Second Look classes, who have typically been discouraged by their families of origin and by their husbands from establishing for themselves an independent job or career.

equality achieved by women at work is only illusory and that, by-in-large, the patriarchal structures which permit men more power and greater success still exist. There is much evidence in sociological literature to show that there are, in fact, an infinite number of barriers to equality for people of particular ethnic backgrounds, races, and religions, and for working class people as well as for women (Freeman, 1979; Glazer & Waehrer, 1977; Janeway, 1971; Millman & Kanter, 1975; Juliet Mitchell, 1969; Rossi, 1969). Anyon's (1981) work on women's accommodation and resistance to the feminine ideal is relevant here. Anyon describes how different women adjust to or reject the two ideologies of patriarchy and democracy, one of which teaches that women are subordinate and inferior, and the other of which teaches that all people are equal.

Finally, the women's reactions to and consciousness of feminist ideology was examined. Eleven women in the study supported the ideals and goals of the Women's Movement. The Women's Movement was credited by eight women as having raised their own consciousness regarding the destructive effects on women of patriarchal ideology. Specifically, feminist ideology meant to them that as women they deserve equal status and opportunities, equal respect, and the right to not be abused. They credited feminist ideology with teaching them to trust and develop relationships with other women, providing them with an understanding of their experience, legitimizing their lifestyle, helping them to recognize their own needs and reducing their sense of isolation or alienation. Further, seven women credited the Women's Movement with changing society in a positive way, for women. Four women stated directly or implied that changes made to benefit women would also benefit children and men by giving them more options and allowing them to develop themselves more fully.

Walker (1981) writes that feminist ideology serves to counter patriarchal ideology by providing an explanation for the gap between patriarchal ideology and women's realities, and by providing an alternate view. With this alternative available, women may better come to understand the reality of their own experiences, she explains. In her words:

> The disjunction between ideology, or the ways given us to understand an experience, and the actuality of our everyday lives is readily apparent to women once they have a way to recognize it is true. This recognition is one often provided by the feminist perspective (p. 36).

This, indeed, seems to be just what has happened for 11 of the 13 participants in this study. Feminist consciousness was relatively high in this group of women, although most of the women did not identify themselves as feminists and would not have considered themselves to be a part of the Women's Movement. Most of the participants would have fit into the growing category of women who typically begin their discussion of women's issues with the phrase, "I'm not a feminist, but...." It is impossible, of course, to generalize about the consciousness of women in relation to feminist ideology from this small group. However, by examining the concerns of the women about the Women's Movement, the conflicts and misunderstandings of the two women who did not generally support feminist ideals and goals, and the dialectic of feminist, patriarchal and democratic ideologies, we may come to a better understanding of women's experience in a culture which is founded on patriarchal ideology, which espouses democratic ideology (but which has limited success in realizing democracy), and which allows for the existence of alternative ideologies (feminist being only one of these) which in theory at least are free to challenge the ideology of the dominant, ruling class.

Certain of the reservations of the participants about the Women's Movement seem to arise from a misunderstanding of the meaning of a particular collective action. For example, Denise interpreted the act of women "burning their bras" to mean they wanted to be like men and were rejecting their uniqueness as women. She did not understand that what was being rejected was the objectification of women's bodies for the pleasure of men. That Denise misinterpreted the women's intentions is easy to understand, however, both because of the nature of the media publicity which covered the action, and because of the great emphasis of the contemporary Women's Movement in the late 60s and early 70s on gaining equality with men. It wasn't until the late 1970s that feminist theory turned to the issue of recognizing women's contribution to society and valuing particular female experiences. Joan and Theresa, too, expressed concern about "radicals" in the Women's Movement and the actions they

took on behalf of particular causes. There seemed to be at the basis of this concern, a judgment (coming from remnants of patriarchal definitions of femininity) that it was not *ladylike* for women to be loud and aggressive. Interestingly, however, as the participants continued to speak of their concerns with the radical activists, they seemed to convince themselves of the value of these actions in drawing attention to issues, and came to a realization that, given the status quo, radicals were forced to take extreme measures if they wanted to be heard.

The concern was expressed by a woman who does not identify herself as a feminist (Beret) and by one who does (Marcela), that "extremists" who reject men on principle are destructive to the Women's Movement. Given the close ties that most women have with men, the belief that feminism means anti-male is guaranteed to alienate women who might otherwise call themselves feminists, explained Marcela. Denise was concerned that in the rush to meet their own needs, women would forget about children. Although her concern clearly reflects the patriarchal attitude that nurturing children is the sole responsibility of women, it may also reflect a fear that becoming a person might mean to women becoming more like men (i.e., leaving the responsibility for child-care to someone else). This fear was part of Madelaine's conflict about feminist ideology. If women want to be equal, she wondered, does that mean they have to fight in wars? That this kind of misunderstanding of feminist ideology occurs can once again be attributed both to how the media and people in power portray the Women's Movement, and to the early emphasis of the Movement on gaining equal opportunity with men (in terms of dividing up the pie more fairly) as opposed to changing social structures and values. A complete misunderstanding of feminist ideology was demonstrated by Alice, who assumed that the patriarchal attitude toward women which judges women's success as "not bad *for a woman*" was feminist. Alice's rejection of feminist ideology also reflects identification with patriarchal ideology which teaches that only the exceptional woman with high status has credibility, and that women who, unlike herself, behave in an aggressive manner are not feminine and therefore are an embarrassment to their sex.

From women who are actively involved in the Women's Movement came two additional concerns. The existence of personal criticism and the competition between women in the Movement was perceived by Marcela to be a destructive force. The phenomenon of personal criticism seems to arise from members of the political left, who focus first on political theory and secondly define behavior in terms of whether or not it is "politically correct." The precedence given to ideas over experience, or to politics over behavior appears to mimic the precedence traditionally given to reason over emotion, and to the public domain over the private sphere. These attitudes are patriarchal in origin. Thus, it seems likely that the tendency of certain members of the Women's Movement to criticize women's personal lives rather than to try to understand and account for women's different experiences will be destructive to the Movement and to women. In addition, it will serve as a barrier to the further development of feminist ideology. The problem of competition among feminists appears to reflect the general attitude toward competition in Western society. Although feminism espouses the ideology of cooperation and equality, there are problems at both the personal and political levels, of understanding and accepting our differences. Thus, the Women's Movement encounters the same problem as other movements: how to account for and successfully build on the differences of its members. Finally, the concern of Joan that the Women's Movement requires much work and energy, and that it involves fighting the status quo and people who see no need for change, brings up two issues. There is, of course, the personal issue which each woman faces in her daily life as she is forced to decide at what level to be involved in the Women's Movement and how much time and energy she can give without experiencing what is commonly known in the helping professions as "burn out." The second issue involves the realization that along with making changes in the social structures and institutions which would reflect the equal status and valuing of women, there continues to be a need for education as to the far-reaching effects of patriarchal ideology, the limitations of democracy and the meaning of feminist ideology.

In discussing the goals of feminism, eleven participants referred to changes they thought would be necessary in order that these goals be achieved. Four

participants spoke of personal changes women needed to make, namely, to respect themselves, to value themselves, to assume their equality and to be assertive. Eight participants spoke of specific social changes needed (day care, health, therapy, religion, law, policies, social attitudes, sexist language) in order that women be treated fairly. Finally, one woman spoke of the need for women to organize around women's issues and as well to join with other organized groups to fight for issues which concern all of humankind. It is recognition of the need for women to support each other and to demand changes collectively, that demands of women a political consciousness. Fransella and Frost (1977) support the notion that both personal relationships and social institutions must be changed in order that women reach the goals of feminism. In other words, women must experience themselves as Subject both in terms of their personal relationships and in relation to the social institutions in their communitites, if they are to truly achieve equality. Only three participants in this study discussed the need for change on both levels. The need for women to pool their experience and work cooperatively for change becomes obvious. Together the participants have the experience from which to base a plan for social change. Alone, they can only hope to find personal solutions to the problems they face, as women.

Evidence of conflict between feminist, patriarchal and democratic ideologies was most obvious in the case of Alice, who confused patriarchal and feminist ideology (ie., confused the idea of token women with affirmative action) and who assumed that society operates democratically ("women will get as many breaks as anyone else" and "I can't think of any part of this world now, that isn't open to both men and women"). Another example of conflict in ideologies involves the definition of equality. Madelaine confused democratic and feminist ideology in that she assumed that feminists would have women go to war in their haste to be equal to men. That Madelaine should experience this kind of confusion is not surprising considering the reactions of government and media spokespersons who also assume that women's equality means they be treated the *same* as men. It was this kind of misunderstanding of feminist ideology which resulted in the Alberta government's policy statement that women should not receive maternity benefits

because men did not. The uneven development of the Women's Movement and the continual need to enlarge and refine feminist ideology is also in part responsible for the confusion of the uninitiated on some issues.

Evidence of conflict between ideologies can also be found in the structure of language used by some of the women. Joan, for example, who feels that the double standard she experiences in her marriage and in business is not fair, continually uses tentative language (probably, sometimes, I guess, kind of, etc.) Kramer (1975) writes that women's use of such qualifiers is indicative of the difficulty they have stating an opinion directly. Lakoff (1973, 1975) maintains that women's language contains patterns of uncertainty compared to men's more forceful statements, and that this difference is indicative of the recognition of male dominance and female subordination by both sexes. Joan's remark about certain successful women having slept their way to the top is another example of how language reflects dominant social attitudes. Smith (1979b) warns that using the oppressor's language distorts women's behavior and alienates women from their own experience and from each other. The process is political, she explains. In Henley's (1975) terms, language is a micro-political structure which helps to establish, express and maintain power relationships. Thus, even as Joan speaks of her dissatisfaction with the manifestations of patriarchal ideology, she is struggling with its effects on her, as indicated by her patterns of speech. Even in her cry against being treated as Other, she remains Other. Beret's language during the interview was also highly tentative. In her case, however, her tentativeness appears to reflect not a conflict of ideologies but the internalizing of the patriarchal ideology which devalues women's experience. Nevertheless, in this sense she, too, is Other. Interestingly, her response to the questionnaire sent out six months after the interview (presented at the beginning of this chapter) shows not only a change in consciousness but also a change in the directness and firmness of her language. Thus, a change in consciousness which results in the changing psychological experience of a woman from Other to Subject is reflected in her language.

One more point about language and its meaning. Denise thinks she is "lucky" in that she has not experienced the hardships that many people have – that she is

lucky to have had a warm and comfortable home, loving family, work she found challenging and satisfying, etc. Attribution theory has demonstrated that unlike men, women attribute their successes to external forces such as fate, rather than to internal forces such as their own determination or competence (Gannon, 1980). Denise's attributing her own life successes to luck could be interpreted in this way, the assumption being that she does not give herself credit for her own abilities. It could also be, however, that Denise recognizes that there are forces quite beyond her control which worked for rather than against her - that the circumstances of her life have been largely positive whereas others have been deprived. It could be that Denise's reference to her luck in this sense, could reflect a consciousness that democratic ideals do not become manifest in everyone's lives, rather than reflecting patriarchal judgment as to her own lack of worth.

A final point concerning ideology. Griffin (1982) reminds us of the danger of ideology which is given precedence over reality. Any idea can become oppressive if it hides the truth to the benefit of one group and the detriment of another. It has been demonstrated in this study how patriarchal ideology supports the inequality of women, and democratic ideology hides the truth about existing inequalities. Feminist ideology is in its infancy. In Freeman's words, "initially there was little ideology in the women's movement beyond a gut feeling that something was wrong" (1979, p. 568). Feminist ideology, as it develops, has the potential to hide the truth. If it becomes merely the reverse of patriarchal ideology (which is not its purpose, although this is not generally understood by people who are not feminists), it will hide the truth about and oppress men. The women would be Subject and men would be Other. If it is based on the experience of a narrow group of women (white, educated professionals, for example) it will hide the truth about and oppress women who do not fit this category. Then some women would be Subject and some women would be Other. The latter has already happened around certain women's issues. Tension between feminists and non-feminists over issues such as child-care, paid work, abortion, etc. arises from each group's perception of themselves as Other in relation to the different group's status as Subject. The same phenomenon occurs between different feminist factions over

clothing, make-up, work, children, men, etc. Griffin (1982) describes a similar phenomenon taking place in her own mind which she describes as a conflict between her political and psychological selves. If it is understood that any ideology has the potential to oppress, and if care is taken to ensure that feminist ideology reflects the reality of all women and the total experience of any one woman, then perhaps feminist ideology can achieve its goal of eliminating the Other from human experience.

D. Meaning and Context: A Dialectic

There is a dynamic relationship between the meanings women give to their experience as women and the context of their lives. From the most personal matters to the social and cultural/political, meanings are attributed to experiences which are at the same time defined, categorized and judged in the social context. In all dimensions of experience both positive and negative meanings were found, and for every meaning there exists an individual/interpersonal/social/economic/cultural/political context in which life is experienced. Thus, the participants were demonstrated to be multi-dimensional. They have changed over time in some ways and remained constant in others. They differed from each other in some ways and shared common meanings in other ways. Contrary to deBeauvoir's (1952) theory, they were not simply Other - victims of a society which defines them as the Second Sex. Examination of the negative meanings of being a woman revealed that the participants were aware of social definitions and expectations that assumed their Otherness. However, it was demonstrated that they sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected these definitions and expectations. Examination of the positive meanings the participants gave to their experience as women, made clear that they found satisfaction in being women in spite of definitions and expectations which devalued and limited them. These women, then, were demonstrated to be sometimes Subject and sometimes Other, and in some ways conscious of their status as Other and in some ways not.

Depending on her individual temperament, family history, past experiences and current situation, each participant experienced a greater or lesser struggle with her status as Other and with her psychological experience as Subject/Other. Examination of

the context of women's lives made clear that either positive or negative meanings can be derived from any one individual factor, from family relationships, from social factors, and from cultural/political factors. What also becomes evident is that these various dimensions have a tremendous impact on women's experience and directly affect the meanings women give to their experience. It is held that an examination of both the meanings and the context of women's experience as women provides psychologists and sociologists with a broader and deeper understanding of the various contextual factors affecting women's psychology. It is hoped that the bridging of these two disciplines will result in an advance in feminist theory.

IX. Conclusion and Implications

A. Conclusion

deBeauvoir theorized in the Second Sex (1952), that just as women are subordinate to men in the social order, they are also psychologically subordinate – that unlike men, they experience themselves as Other instead of as Subject. It was argued in Chapter I that deBeauvoir's theory of women's psychological experience was simplistic (in that she assumed psychology to be a reflection of sociology, and women, therefore, to be passive victims of patriarchal oppression) and androcentric (in that she judged women's experience in terms of the values and priorities of a male-dominated social order). deBeauvoir's theory was also faulty because while she asked herself, "What has it meant to me to be a woman?", she failed to ask this question of women unlike herself. Instead, she viewed women's experience from her own perspective and interpreted this to be the experience of "woman." Finally, deBeauvoir's theory was viewed critically because she determined that if women were to be true Subjects of their lives, they must "choose" to be, thus limiting "the problem of women" to the existential realm and ignoring the social realm. In this sense, deBeauvoir appears to be elitest: she lacks an understanding of the effect of real barriers to equality on women less fortunate than herself, and judges their behavior to be a passive acceptance of their definition as Other.

The Case Studies

The purpose of this study was to examine the meanings women give to their experience as women, and the context of this experience. To this end, 13 women with different life experiences were interviewed. The case studies demonstrated that the participants, regardless of their age, education, work experience, etc., can provide a structure for their life experience in which the meanings of their experience as women and the important factors affecting this experience emerge. An in-depth examination of each participant's experience as a woman revealed that different women have different meanings for the same terms used by them to describe their experience. Further, is was revealed that women's experience as women is highly complex. For example, it was demonstrated that what are often assumed to be diametrically-opposed and exclusive traits were often present simultaneously. Further, these traits were demonstrated to

occur in particular contexts. The complexity of women's experience as women was also demonstrated in that each woman attributed a variety of meanings to her experience as a women. In addition, it was seen that these meanings can change over time. Further, the same experience might have different meanings for different women. Thus, the simplicity of deBeauvoir's (1952) theory of women as a psychological Other appears suspect.

The Meanings of Being a Woman

It was expected that the meanings women gave to their experience as women, and their descriptions of these meanings, would reveal that they experienced themselves sometimes or in some ways as Subject, not simply as Other. Further, it was expected that if women experienced a reality different from what is formally defined (i.e., if there was a perceived gap between reality and the dominant ideology), then this would also be revealed. Indeed, both expectations were born out. From the six positive and six negative meanings the participants gave to their experience as women, it was demonstrated that in some ways they experience themselves as Other and in some ways they experience themselves as Subject. It was also demonstrated that women's experience of themselves as Other or as Subject in any one sense can change over time. Again, women's psychological experience as women is seen to be much more complex than what deBeauvoir theorized.

It was demonstrated that the six negative meanings of being a woman resulted directly or indirectly from attitudes toward (or expectations placed on) women that stem from notions about the definition of women as Other in relation to men – as subordinate to men, as subject to abuse by men, as properly dependent on men, as restricted to roles which benefit men, or as limited in their opportunities compared to men. Further, it was demonstrated that the women might be defined as Other in two ways: Other in relation to men who are Subject, or Other in relation to the ideal image of femininity as defined under patriarchy. However, the participants did not necessarily accept the definition of Otherness in either sense. Some women experienced themselves as Other in some ways and as Subject in different ways. For example, Marcela rejected her emotional life which she believed to be inferior to men's intellectual lives, and Jean rejected her appearance which she believed to be inadequate compared to the feminine

ideal. In other ways, however, both Marcela and Jean experienced themselves as Subject (in their studies and work, for example), and both publically defended the right of women to be equal. Sometimes a woman's experience of herself changed over time – whereas she experienced herself as Other at one time, at a later time she experienced herself as Subject. For example, when Joan decided with the support of her doctor to leave her children with a babysitter and go out to work, she experienced herself as Subject instead of Other. Mary underwent a similar change when she decided with the help of a therapist and her friends to leave her first marriage. The converse also happens. Heidi experienced herself as Subject in relation to her parental family, but after she married began to experience herself as Other in relation to her husband. Her experience of Otherness expanded throughout her marriage and at the time her husband "kept her hostage" in their basement, she experienced this almost totally. She felt herself then to be "a fly against a bulldozer."

The rejection of the definition of Other was tremendously difficult for women who perceived themselves as having no alternative and no support. Women who were sexually and psychologically abused and physically exploited in their homes as children (as in the case of Christine and Elizabeth) and were powerless to change their situations experienced a psychological sense of Otherness which took many years to overcome. Further, they required extensive therapy to help them regain a sense of themselves as Subject.

The findings of this thesis suggest that women's definition as Other may result in their internalizing this definition and experiencing themselves psychologically as Other. However, they may also reject the definition and with the knowledge that an alternative is available may establish themselves as Subject with varying degrees of struggle. In no case, however, are they passive victims of their subordination. Behavior which may appear to others to be passive and accommodating may be viewed by the woman herself as her best strategy for coping with her life circumstances, given her past experience and perceived alternatives. Heidi's "decision" to stay with her abusive husband, Elizabeth's and Sally's suicide attempts, and Alice's "playing feminine" can all be understood as a best response to a particular situation under the circumstances. An indepth study of the social and psychological factors operating in the women's lives

revealed that behind seemingly passive behavior lay reasoned action. For example, Heidi's tolerance of the physical and psychological abuse she experienced with her husband can be seen as deliberate action on her part. By staying in the marriage, she was being a good wife and mother in the eyes of her church. Further maintaining financial support from her husband enabled her to provide her children with the education that she had been denied. However, in the case of children, who are always in a situation of having less power than the adults on whom they depend, their dependence and powerlessness seems to preclude their independent experience of themselves as Subject when they are consistently treated as Other (i.e., when they are abused by their parents). Support or encouragement from outside the family (such as Elizabeth had from her teachers) can provide some experience of being a Subject. However, if the abuse in the home is extreme, the experience of Otherness will outweigh the experience of being a Subject with devastating consequences. Professional assistance in addition to support from others will likely be necessary in order that a sense of self as Subject can be established.

It was demonstrated that the six positive meanings of being a woman reflected experiences in which the participants experienced themselves as Subject. They varyingly enjoyed themselves, found fulfillment or satisfaction in being womanly or sexual, in nurturing children, in being warm, understanding, helpful, etc., in achieving relationships, in paid work, or in the ideals and goals of the Women's Movement. The ways in which the participants experienced themselves as Subject did not simply reflect their accommodation to a definition of femininity. Whereas the majority of participants enjoyed their physical selves in some way, only one perceived herself to be "feminine" in the stereotypic sense, and she interpreted her behaviour to be an act (playing at being feminine) which gave her power. Thus, even though she publically played at being submissive (Other) she privately maintained a sense of herself as Subject.

As regards women's experience being mothers, it was discovered that it is necessary to distinguish between valuing one's children and finding satisfaction in nurturing those children. While all mothers stated they valued their children, less than half found satisfaction in nurturing children. Of those who did, none limited their work to nurturing children – all found meaning and satisfaction in paid work as well. The

institutionalization of motherhood – the *role* of mother and the expectations that a mother's activities necessarily need to be limited to nurturing children, that responsibility for parenting belongs largely to her alone, and that she *naturally* feels always loving toward her children – undermines the mother/child relationship. Thus, the stereotype of the nurturing mother who retains power over her family in the home and finds fulfillment in her duties is challenged.

Also challenged is the stereotype of the feminine woman who is warm, caring, sensitive, understanding and helpful (less than half of the participants perceived and valued this in themselves). That all of the participants found satisfaction in achieving relationships could at first glance be seen as stereotypic, i.e., women are other-directed. However, close examination revealed that women were discriminating in the meanings they gave to particular relationships. Families of origin were valued by most participants but for a variety of reasons. In some instances participants experienced themselves as Other in relation to families and in some instances they experienced themselves as Subject. Most marriages were experienced with greater dissatisfaction than satisfaction, although current marriages were all valued. (Divorce meant to most participants the rejection of the experience of Otherness and the assertion of oneself as Subject.) Friends were valued highly (by all but one participant) and were generally defined as people with whom one could be oneself and feel equal, i.e., be Subject. Friendships with women were particularly valued by the majority of participants, and were typically spoken of as being a relatively new experience. Perhaps women's other-directedness can be more fully understood as women creating for themselves experiences in which they are Subject, within the confines of a society which defines them as Other. The participants are also seen to be inner-directed, however, in so far as they also value their paid work outside of the home. Paid work, they explained, offered them a chance to feel independent, capable, challenged and useful. In other words, working outside the home for pay (no matter the status of the job) allowed the women the experience of being Subject. This challenges the stereotypic image of the feminine woman who is satisfied with nurturing children and working at home for no pay. Further, it challenges the notion that if women are other-directed, then they cannot also be inner-directed.

Finally, the majority of the participants valued the ideals and goals of the Women's Movement, although most would not consider themselves feminists. Generally, they had been personally affected by the Women's Movement in a positive way in that it provided them with an analysis that fit their experience, taught them to value themselves and their women friends, legitimized their concerns, and pressured for social and legal change which benefited them. Thus, the Women's Movement was perceived to support women's struggle to be Subject, socially and psychologically. There were, however, some confusions about feminist ideology and a lack of understanding or misinterpretation of the meaning of particular feminist actions or goals. The confusions can be attributed both to misrepresentation in the media and to confusion or debate within the Movement itself as to its goals and practices. Reservations held about the Women's Movement by women not actively involved paralleled the concerns of women who were involved in the movement.

Women's Experience in Context

Investigation of the histories and circumstances of the participants' lives gives us a broader understanding of their experience as Subject and/or Other. Personal factors (health, physical appearance, temperament), though particular to one individual, must be understood in terms of how each factor is perceived by or interacts with the larger culture. Health and illness are socially defined as well as individually experienced, and treatment is offered or withheld according to the values and priorities of the medical structure, which in turn reflects the values and attitudes of society generally. Thus, the judgment of women as less valuable than men, affects women's experience of themselves as Other in relation to health and illness. Accurate knowledge of their own physiology and an awareness of the origin of misinformation can help women experience themselves as Subject in this sense. Physical appearance, too, is experienced in terms its societal meaning. Because women have been defined as sexual objects, and because it has been expected that women gain an identity through marriage, physical appearance has been an area of great significance and vulnerability to women. Should they not attain the standard of femininity which prescribes how they should ideally appear, they are more likely to experience themselves as Other.

Temperament can be reinforced and can be experienced as advantageous or disadvantageous within culture. Shy, withdrawn, or passive personalities whose life experience reinforced these tendencies, seem to run a greater risk of experiencing themselves as Other than do more determined and active personalities. Thus, it is held that it is imperative to examine individual factors as they are situated within a culture. Investigation of these individual factors in isolation, or in a controlled, laboratory atmosphere, results in a limited, superficial understanding at best and a completely inaccurate and distorted understanding at worst.

Family relationships and dynamics were demonstrated to be highly significant determinants of whether women experience themselves as Other or Subject. Relationships with mothers were largely conflicted, due (it seems) to the social definition of both mother and daughter as Other and their various ways of trying to cope with this. Daughters may experience rejection from mothers if they are perceived to be less valuable than sons or less feminine than the ideal. Daughters may also experience rejection when mothers have too many problems of their own to contend with, when needy mothers expect their daughters to nurture them, or when mothers fear their daughters' developing sexuality. Daughters may reject mothers because they are not nurturing, because they do not respect their mothers' way of coping with their definition of Otherness, or because they experience that their mothers want nothing more for them than they are themselves (Other). At the same time, daughters want to be loved and accepted by their mothers, to respect their mothers as Subjects, and to be encouraged by them to be Subject. Thus, there exists a great potential for conflict. When daughters experienced their mothers to be loving, worthy of respect and encouraging, the relationships were viewed as positive. When none of these were experienced, the relationships were perceived as negative. The fact that positive and negative relationships were by far in the minority and conflicting relationships in the majority suggests that mother/daughter relationships commonly reflect the struggle of women (both mothers and daughters) to be Subject in a world that defines them as Other.

Relationships with fathers were more varied: they were experienced as positive, conflicting, negative and, in addition, as inconsequential. Father/daughter relationships that were experienced as positive were described as loving and supportive and the

father was respected (as with mothers). Conflicting relationships resulted when one or two of the positive features was missing and the father was perceived to be inadequate himself or to have limited expectations for his daughter (as with mothers). Negative relationships with fathers were extremely abusive or oppressive (whereas with mothers there typically was just an absence or lack of nurturance and/or support.) The fourth category of father/daughter relationships – inconsequential – is attributed to the stereotyped notion of men as not particularly involved in family matters, which, therefore, supports a father's lack of involvement with his daughter and creates or reinforces the daughter's lack of expectation that she be supported by her father. This phenomenon was also present in two of the conflicting father/daughter relationships, but to a lesser degree (i.e., fathers were perceived to have had less effect on daughters than did mothers). It seems that the lesser incidence of conflicting relationships and greater incidence of positive relationships, greater degree of abusive relationships and the added phenomena of inconsequential relationships with fathers compared to mothers can be explained in terms of men's and women's differing definitions as Subject and Other. Fathers' are formally defined as Subject, uninvolved and unemotional, who have the *option* to be loving, abusive or absent. Daughters benefit from a loving and supportive relationship with fathers, or are harmed by abuse and oppression, but are unlikely to reject the father if he is more or less ungiving or absent (physically or emotionally). In contrast, mothers and daughters are formally defined as Other and both struggle against this definition and its consequences, resulting in a greater incidence of conflict. Further, the mother is more likely to be rejected by the daughter if she fails to be nurturing or is perceived to be physically or emotionally absent, because she is expected to be emotionally involved.

The dynamic between mother and father was also demonstrated to be important to the participants' experience of themselves as Subject or Other. A mutually respectful and loving relationship between parents, or a dynamic whereby the mother stood up to a father who assumed she should be subordinate, encouraged daughters to perceive themselves as Subject. In contrast, daughters who perceived their parents to be emotionally distant or perceived their mothers as accepting a subordinate position in relation to their husbands, experienced more difficulty being Subject. In the first

instance they were generally insecure emotionally and lacked the confidence necessary to be Subject. In the second instance they either modelled their mother's Otherness or, if they rejected it, did not have a vision of how to be Subject. Sibling dynamics were also important factors for some participants in terms of number of siblings, sex of siblings and birth order. Eldest daughters in large families seemed the most vulnerable to abuse. Social circumstances such as rural lifestyle and financial security interacted with sibling dynamics and resulted in positive or negative effects on daughters. Relationships with elder female relatives and to a somewhat less extent with elder male relatives were experienced both positively and negatively.

Various social factors were seen to have had a significant effect on the participants as regards their experience of themselves as Other or Subject. Financial and social status were seen to have had either a positive or negative effect on the experience of more than half of the participants. If financial status had a negative effect, it did not necessarily follow that social status would also have a negative effect, however. It is therefore concluded that psychological theory should take these factors into account, and not simply control for them. It is further concluded that social and financial status should be viewed as two separate factors, not as one joint factor. Friendships in childhood and the fact of belonging or not belonging to a group of peers was also significant to a majority of the participants. While psychological theory on child development recognizes the importance of childhood friendships or lack thereof, personality and counselling theory generally fails to consider this experience. Behavourial theory focuses almost exclusively on current experience and discounts childhood experience; and psychoanalytic theory limits its examination of personal history to the family of origin.

Social norms were seen to have affected the participants' experience of themselves as Other or Subject in so far as they experienced expectations regarding education, work, marriage, child care and maternal love. While they experienced different expectations regarding education and work, they all experienced the expectation that they *should be* married, or that marriage was normal or inevitable, if not ideal. Similarly, all the participants experienced the expectation that as women they must *naturally* enjoy nurturing children, and those who had children learned that they *should*

stay home and care for them. If the expectations *fit* a woman's situation or behaviour, the social norms and values were experienced as reinforcing, and the likelihood of a woman experiencing herself as Subject (in the sense of meeting the standard of the feminine ideal) was increased. If her situation or behaviour did not fit the norm (if she did not marry or did not enjoy nurturing children, for example), she was more likely to experience herself as Other (in the sense of being a failure as a woman – less than ideal). However, given that the roles of wife and mother define women as Other in relation to men, women who fit the ideal image of femininity or meet social expectations re marriage and maternal nurturing may still experience themselves as Other in relation to men. The phenomenological analysis carried out in this thesis suggests that the *institutions* of marriage and motherhood undermine relationships with husbands and children. Similarly, it was demonstrated that mother/daughter and father/daughter relationships were in different ways undermined by women's formal definition and experience of Other in relation to men, and their experience as Other in relation to a feminine ideal.

The effects on women of professionals and institutional policies is rarely investigated by psychologists. This study demonstrates that professionals can exert either a significant positive or negative effect on women's experience of themselves as Subject *or* Other. There was no gender difference in the professionals as regards their being respectful or not, helpful or not, or supportive or not. Only male professionals were experienced as being abusive, however. The abusive behaviour of male professionals was similar to that of abusive fathers in that the women were defined as Other in the sense of being sexual objects who could be exploited by men. The professionals who were sexually abusive toward women in this study were therapists – both psychiatrists and psychologists. While sexual harassment of female clients by male therapists has recently been recognized as a problem by professional organizations, [22] little action has been taken against professionals to this time, to the knowledge of the author. Policy was primarily experienced by the participants as having a negative effect – as assuming women's Otherness compared to men. It is concluded that if psychologists continue to fail to examine in their research the effect on women of

[22]The Psychologists Association of Alberta in 1982 sent a letter to members stating the position of the organization against such behaviour on the part of psychologists.

social factors such as professionals' behaviour and institutional policies, they will continue to fail to understand women's experience in its complexity.

The broadest dimensions of experience – the cultural/political forces which are generally examined by sociologists, anthropologists and historians but only infrequently examined by psychologists – were also seen to have affected the participants tremendously. Living in a rural setting had a significant impact (positive and negative) on some participants. Being a member of an ethnic minority or being an immigrant also exerted both positive and negative effects. For certain individuals, cultural difference or immigrant status were major factors in their experience of themselves as Other. Political/economic forces such as the depression of the 1930s, World War I, the Vietnam War and the current threat of nuclear disaster also had varying effects on the participants and were major forces in certain individuals' lives. These forces, like the cultural forces, while sometimes having a positive effect, more often had a negative effect. While they may have directly contributed to women's experience as Other (or Subject) in relation to men, they also frequently resulted in complications which made even more difficult women's struggle against their definition as Other.

Ideology may consciously or unconsciously affect women's experience of themselves as Subject or Other. The participants were to varying degrees conscious of patriarchal ideology (i.e., the legitimization of male power and the devaluing of women) and how it had adversely affected them. It was also demonstrated that in different ways and to varying degrees they had rejected aspects of patriarchal ideology. Again, they resisted the definition of themselves as Other in some senses and asserted themselves as Subject. Democratic ideology was seen to have had a positive effect in that it taught women they could be equal to men in terms of value and opportunities. It could also have a negative effect, however, in that it hid the fact that sometimes women's failure to achieve was based on discrimination or restriction. Thus, it encouraged women to attribute their experience to personal failure and to experience themselves as Other.

Feminist ideology was viewed by the majority of women in this study to have had a positive influence on women generally and on themselves particularly. It made them aware of specific elements of patriarchal ideology and its manifestations which had been destructive to them. In addition, it offered them an alternative in that it demanded their

right to equal status, equal opportunities, equal pay, etc., and their right to live without abuse. In other words, feminist ideology filled the gap between patriarchal ideology and the reality of women's lives. It was not accepted without criticism, however. Some criticism involved judgments based on patriarchal attitudes and values (i.e., women should be passive and ladylike), and some criticism was based on a misunderstanding of patriarchal and feminist ideology or a lack of consciousness as to the limitations of democratic ideology. However, other criticism was based on a concern that some feminists would treat all men or particular women as Other, and simply be reversing or continuing a destructive force already present under patriarchy. Change at both the personal level and at the social/political level was recognized by the participants collectively, as necessary in order that women experience themselves fully as Subject. Individually, however, the participants were only partially conscious of the kinds and degrees of change necessary.

B. Implications

Implications for Psychological Research

The implications for psychologists and their future research has already been alluded to in the conclusion section. The experiences which women perceive as negative obviously require further investigation. The problems of women who experience themselves psychologically as Other need to be more thoroughly understood so that these women can be better helped, and so that the need for social change be more widely perceived. The ways in which women experience themselves as Subject also need further investigation in order that we know what strengths we have to build on. Different kinds of questions must be asked by psychologists in order that we gain the knowledge we require today. Failure to investigate the meaning to women of their behaviour or experience results in a failure to understand their psychological experience. Consequently, theory about women will be inaccurate or distorted. If norms and expectations are viewed simply as necessary prescriptions for behaviour, rather than investigated as to their effect on women, theories of women's psychological experience will continue to be impoverished and to reinforce women's status as Other. Further, if psychologists ignore the broad social/cultural/political context of women's lives, they

will continue to falsely expect that women's personal solutions and individual choices are the only kinds of change necessary for them to be wholly functioning, healthy people. In other words, it is imperative that psychologists examine both the *meaning* to women of their experience and the broad *context* of this experience, in order that their understanding transcend the definition of women as Other. Of course, there are implications here for the understanding of human experience as well. Understanding the ramifications of expectations on men to be masculine may reveal that some men, too, experience themselves as Other in relation to the ideal of masculinity. Further, the effect on men of being formally defined as Subject, if more comprehensively examined, might reveal that behaviour assumed to be "normal" for men (i.e., aggressiveness, violence) may be the result of their attempt to accommodate themselves to a definition which emphasizes their powerfulness. The implications for further understanding of human experience can only begin to be surmised.

The need to ask questions about the meaning and context of experience makes obvious the need for psychologists to use research methods other than the traditional, empirical science method. This is not to say that the empirical method is inferior, only that it has limitations – it is simply a means to a particular kind of knowledge. Questions about meaning require a phenomenological-type approach, and questions about context require a critical theory-type approach. While it was demonstrated that the notions of objectivity and neutrality serve to conceal the limitations of the empirical method, the other methods also have limitations. The phenomenological method, which uses the researcher as an interviewing tool, is dependent on the competence of the interviewer for its success. An unskilled interviewer would be as detrimental to a phenomenological study as would a sexist test to an empirical study. Gender, personality and professional credibility were identified by the participants of this study as important factors in their being open in the interview. The implications, therefore, are that when using the phenomenological method of research, care must be taken that the interviewer have the necessary communications skills and be perceived as credible and as warm, friendly and non-judgmental. As regards gender, it seems likely at this time that most women will be more comfortable with female interviewers. It cannot be assumed from this, however, that most men will be more comfortable with male interviewers, since research

demonstrates that men more often choose to speak about personal matters with women, than with men (Woolsey-Toews, 1971). If there is a concern about whether a male or female interviewer would be most appropriate, individual participants could be allowed to choose the gender they prefer. The researcher also plays a major role in critical theory research, in so far as the consciousness of the researcher as to the relevance of social/cultural/political factors to psychological experience can be limited. The ability of the researcher to understand, organize and integrate various kinds of experiences is also crucial to this method. Thus the quality of the analysis is dependent on the consciousness and the analytical skills of the researcher. Use of the phenomenological method in conjunction with critical theory serves the purpose of ensuring that the participants', not just the interviewer's interpretations, will be represented in the critical theory analysis. Exposing the dialectic between context and meaning also provides for greater understanding of how social/cultural/political factors are manifest in psychological experience. A study, such as this one, which uses a phenomenological/critical theory approach (in this case to understand women's psychological experience as Other and Subject) could be used as a basis for the development of an instrument which in an empirical study could test the validity of new concepts.

Implications for Psychological Theory

That women give particular meanings to their experiences as women challenges psychological theory which assumes them to be a blank slate whose behavior is *determined* by environmental factors. Thus, behavioral psychology is demonstrated to be too simplistic to explain women's experience. That women react against their status as Other - reject labels which they perceive to be inaccurate and consciously act to change circumstances which they experience as oppressive - challenges psychological theory which assumes them to be *passive victims* of their social circumstances. Thus, social learning theory is also demonstrated to be too simplistic to explain women's experience. The findings of this study regarding the familial, social, cultural, political, and ideological factors which influenced women's experience as women challenges psychological theory which assumes women's behavior to be *biologically determined* (psychoanalytic theory), to be *innate* to their person or gender (personality trait theory),

or be their *personal responsibility* (humanistic psychology). These theories, too, are demonstrated to be too simplistic to account for the total of women's experience as women. A more complex theory of the psychology of women (and humans) is obviously required. This study has begun the groundwork for such a theory. Understanding the meaning women give to their experience as women and the contexts in which they live their lives enables us to see women's behavior as neither innately nor environmentally determined. Rather, we see women as individuals with particular temperaments, physiologies and human potentials (and with particular personal, famililial, social, and cultural/political histories) who actively *negotiate* their experience with those persons, institutions and ideologies which attempt to define it. The new theory would be *dialectical* in that a *between the actor and her circumstances would be recognized. In other words, a dialectical theory would acknowledge both change over time and the connection between the personal and the political. The potential of individuals to act upon and change their circumstances and give meaning to their experiences would be recognized. At the same time it would be recognized that social/cultural/political dimensions affect individuals experience and consciousness. Neither factor determines the other and neither is simply a reflection of the other. Rather, the relationship between the two involves a process which stimulates change in both and creates new solutions and problems and new perspectives. It is this process* of interaction, of women actively negotiating their life circumstances, that a new psychological theory of personality/development must reflect.

Implications for Counselling Women

The Broverman et al (1970) study demonstrated that therapists, like other members of society generally, viewed healthy women as having adjusted to their gender roles. In other words, therapists perceived women as Other, and presumably attempted to help women to accept this definition of themselves. This study demonstrates that some women experience negatively the expectations that they *should* be married, and be content to stay home and nurture their children. Therapists need to recognize the effect that these expectations can have on women whose lives do not fit the prescribed roles, or whose feelings do not match what is *supposed to be*. They should also be aware that the way marriage and motherhood are institutionalized creates problems for

women. Career counsellors should be aware of the masculine bias in many tests and institutional policies, and take care not to inadvertently discriminate against women. Further, they should recognize the value of paid work to women, and explore beyond statements about women's "choice" to not work outside of the home, or her "lack of motivation" to acquire a job or succeed in a career. Questions about meaning ("What does that mean to you?") and about context ("Where does that idea, behaviour, feeling, etc. come from?") can help the therapist and client to understand the impact and origin of social expectations on women.

Psychoanalytic and humanistic therapists have recognized the importance of original family members for encouraging healthy or unhealthy patterns of behaviour. This study suggests that an individual's internal dynamics can be better understood when it is recognized that relationships with mothers and fathers are in part a response to cultural ideas concerning the *nature* of females and males. Bringing to an individual woman's awareness the effect on herself and her parents of the social definitions of men as Subject and women as Other can have the benefit of putting the relationships in a broader, more honest and insightful perspective.

This study demonstrates that friendships (or lack thereof) in childhood and adulthood may have a great effect on women's psychological experience. Women's friendships with other women were particularly important because of the mutual understanding, acceptance and support that was experienced. Counsellors would do well to explore the issue of friendships with female clients and if it is determined that friends are a missing aspect of their lives attention could be paid to this problem. Counsellors should also recognize that social status and economic status might have a major effect on women's psychological experience. It should be recognized, too, that factors such as ethnic status, immigrant status, depression or recession, and war have profound effects on women. Finally, the effects on women of various ideologies should be understood by counsellors. This awareness seems especially important in light of the results of this study which demonstrated that there is often a gap between ideology and reality, and that ideology sometimes takes precedence over reality. Again, consciousness-raising can be helpful in giving a perspective to a particular woman's experience. While it may sound reasonable to say that men, too, would benefit from

attention to these various issues, it is expected that they would be differently affected by various factors, given their different formal definition within a patriarchal system.

Arising from this study are four areas of special concern that should be heeded by counsellors: body image, incest, wife battery, and sexual assault and harassment. Feminist therapists have recognized all of these issues as particular to women, and as related to women's subordinate status and devaluation. Women's definition as Other both precedes these issues and prevents society from taking them seriously after the fact. In the past, therapists have been likely to echo judgments of society that women who are fat have no willpower, that incest victims provoked it (or fantasized it), that battered wives deserved it, and that victims of sexual assault or harassment invited it. Research on incest victims has shown that reactions of therapists (and parents) to the victims can be as damaging as the initial incidents. Some feminist therapists maintain that in light of the negative experiences reported by female clients in relation to male therapists, male therapists are likely to identify with the male perpetrators in these incidents. They maintain, therefore, that only feminist or non-sexist therapists (with knowledge and expertise in these areas) should work with female clients in these cases. My experience as a therapist leads me to concur. Further, the results of this study which demonstrated that more than half of the participants would be more comfortable with a female interviewer in a research situation supports this idea. Therefore, it is concluded that with regard to counselling issues that are particular to women, especially those involving violence or abuse, feminist or non-sexist therapists only should work with female clients, given the general lack of understanding of women's experiences today.

Implications for Feminist Theory and the Women's Movement

Implications for feminist theory and for the Women's Movement generally also arise from this study. Feminist theory, in the tradition of deBeauvoir (1952), has long concentrated on women's formal status as Other. This focus no doubt also resulted from the fact that greater numbers of sociologists than psychologists became active in feminist theory building in the 1960s and early 1970s. Further, in radical political circles (from which many of the early feminist activists came) action was often judged on the basis of its being politically correct, not personally relevant. In any case, the

psychological experience of women was not seriously studied, and instead was assumed to simply reflect the formal definition of women as understood by sociologists. Even when feminist historians understood that women were more than simply victims of oppressive systems, the notion of women as complex psychological beings was not fully recognized. Feminist theory has tended to ignore or discount the psychological realm of womens lives, the result of which is that the Women's Movement has been limited in very specific ways. First, it has alienated women who, unconscious of their formal status as Other (because they fit the ideal image of femininity or because they have limited experience) assume they are Subject and blame themselves for their failures. Second, it has accepted the patriarchal definition of women as Other in so far as it has perpetuated the myth of Woman – assuming the reality of one female experience or one feminist consciousness. Differences among women have sometimes been perceived as threats to the Women's Movement, rather than as variances to be integrated and transcended. Third, in underestimating the importance of the psychological dimension of experience, the Women's Movement has neglected to understand that women will be reached on issues which concern them personally, rather than on issues outside the realm of their experience. Thus, if women not associated with the movement are to be reached, they must be asked to speak of their experiences, not told what to think of another's experience. The error here is that women have been once again defined as Other (in relation to a feminist Subject). Finally (and this limitation is inherent to any ideology and must continually be guarded against), feminists must continually distinguish between developing feminist ideology and the reality of women's lives. Then, when a gap between theory and experience is perceived, it will be understood that the possibility exists that the theory should be modified, rather than the actual experience be negated or judged invalid. In other words, the personal meaning of women's experience must be understood and accounted for. Only then can the Women's Movement successfully work toward the goal of women overcoming not just their social definition as Other, but also their psychological Otherness, and build on their experience of themselves as Subject.

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Appendix A

Education, Counselling, Training and Teaching Experience re. Communication Skills

Counselling Experience

Clinical Psychologist, Glenrose Hospital, Edmonton (1972, 1975)

Private practice specializing in problems particular to women, Edmonton (1975–1982)

Education

Master of Education in Counselling Psychology
University of Alberta, Edmonton, (1972)

Training Experience

Training lay counsellors in communication skills at a Rape Crisis Center (1975, 1976)

Training lay counsellors and homemakers in Social Service Programs (1976 to 1982)

Training interviewers on a Senior Citizen Research Project (1981)

Training lay counsellors at a Battered Womens' Shelter (1982)

Teaching Experience

"Self–awareness and Counselling Skills", Y.M.C.A., Chiang Mai, Thailand (1976)

"Human Relations in the Classroom," Dalhousie University, Halifax (1976)

"Communication and Presentation," "Introduction to the Practicum," Administrator of Practicum and Supervision of Practicum Students, Division of Family Studies, Faculty of Home Economics, University of Alberta (1976–1977)

"Introduction to Counselling" Department of Education Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta (1978)

"Second Look" for women, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta (1975, 1976, 1981, 1982)

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Name:

Date:

Initials:

Place:

Age:

Phone No.:

Place of birth:

Nationality:

Ethnic Background:

Religion:

Educational history:

Occupational history:

Financial resources:

Organizational membership:

Volunteer work:

Leisure activities:

Residence history:

Age left parental home:

Marital status: single ( ) married ( ) separated ( )
divorced ( ) widowed ( ) remarried ( )
cohabiting ( ) communal ( ) other ( )

Age when: married separated divorced widowed
remarried cohabiting communal other

How long? married separated divorced widowed
remarried cohabiting communal other

Children: (sex, age, domicile)

Grandchildren:

Great-grand children:

Husband or cohabitor: age

place of birth

nationality

ethnic background

education

occupation

religion

financial resources

Mother: age

place of birth

nationality

ethnic background

education

occupation

religion

Father: age

place of birth

nationality

ethnic background

education

occupation

religion

Siblings: (sex, age, domicile)

Birth order:

Importance of family:

Friendships:

Importance of friendships:

Additional information:

Appendix C

Date: Name:

1. What effect, if any, did the interview have on you – on your thoughts, feelings, ways of looking at things, attitudes, behavior, etc.? Please be specific.

2. Regarding the effects from question 1, what does this mean to you?

3. Have you done, said or experienced anything differently as a result, or partly as a result, of what we talked about in the interview? Please explain.

4. Regarding the differences noted in question 3, what does this mean to you?

5. What did the interview mean to you? Please elaborate.

6. If you were telling a friend about the interview, would you recommend that she do one or not? Why or why not?

7. Have you any other comments about the interview of things that were important to you or that you might think be helpful to me?

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE AS WOMEN: MEANING AND CONTEXT

by

(C) CHERYL LYNNE MALMO

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1983

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The Case Studies

A. Joan

Joan is a 34 year old woman, born in Canada of English ancestory, presently living in a small city in Alberta. Her mother is a homemaker with a grade nine education. Her stepfather has a grade eight education and works for the government. Joan was the eldest of three children. She has a grade 10 plus business school education and is presently employed as a real estate salesperson, making $25,000 a year. Previously she worked as a secretary, homemaker, cashier and ceramic tile installer. Joan married at age 19, has been married for 15 years, and has two children aged 14 and 11. Her husband is in the construction business and makes about the same amount of money as she does. In her community Joan belongs to a recreation association.

In answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?", Joan stated initially that she has never thought about being a woman. She then answered that sometimes it doesn't feel fair, that in her marriage she experiences a double standard.

> Well, I don't know. I've never really thought about being a woman. Sometimes I feel that it's not fair. Fair like in a relationship, like in a home. My husband can go out and do all these neat things and I sort of have to ask him permission if I want to go and do something. This probably isn't a very good example, but like if he goes to the bar at night with his friends, he can come home whenever he wants and it's fine. But if there's two girls downstairs and we go to the bar once in a while, it's always like I walk in the door and he gives me this guilt feeling or he gets kind of upset because I do go to the bar, like 'Oh, you're going to be an alcoholic.' And I think to myself, 'Dammit, why should he think that way?' I'm not doing anything more than he's doing and yet I'm supposed to be at home looking after the kids and he can go and do all sorts of things. If he wants to go hunting for a week end, he just tells me, 'I'm going hunting with so and so.' If I wanted to do anything like that, it has to be a cut and dried thing, like to a convention, or to see my sister or something like that. I can't just go because I want to go. Whereas he can sort of, 'Well, I'm going hunting for the weekend and see you on Monday,' sort of thing. Whereas I feel that I have to come up with a lot of different excuses or reasons or whatever so that I can go, so that I can get his permission.

Joan thinks that her experience of a double standard in her marriage is in part her own making, a pattern learned with her father and continued into her adulthood. She explains:

> But I think a lot of that is my own thinking, too. I don't think he's the ogre that I make him out to be. I think a lot of it is in my mind, that I have to ask permission. That probably goes back to my childhood, I guess. Like I've always felt that my dad was very strict and I had to ask him everything. I wasn't allowed to go to a show unless I asked Dad. I've always felt that I had to ask permission. Even when I was living on my own, I wasn't really living on my own. I was boarding with some people and I never felt free to come in at five o'clock in the morning. I always felt like I had to ask permission or I don't know, get approval, I guess. So that's probably where it came from. But I know at home sometimes, it really does bug me. That he can go and do all this kind of stuff and when I do it, because I do do it, but when I do it I come home and I feel really guilty because I've done it. And I haven't done anything. So that's probably one of the things that kind of make me mad. It's kind of a double standard in a way.

However, Joan experiences other difficulties in the relationship as well. When she was in the process of starting a ceramic tile business she felt a lack of support and a lack of serious consideration regarding her ability to work outside the home, until she had proven herself financially.

> And too, anything that I've ever done, like work related – like you know I had that ceramic tile business a few years ago – well, when I first started to do it my husband thought that was really kind of funny and he sort of laughed at me in a way. Well I just kept on and my first job was a $24 job type of thing. But I kept on and after about a year I was making $100 a day. Well, when I started to make reasonably good money he thought it was a hell of a good deal. When I could show that I could do it and people were calling me and all the rest of this, well then it was a good deal. But until then, 'Oh, ha, ha, ha' type of thing. And then when I quit that to get into real estate, he was, 'Oh, what are you giving up such a good deal for? You're out there, you've got your own hours,' the whole thing. When I first started, he certainly didn't talk like that, but once I proved that I could do it he'd be down telling his friends how great I was at this and how much money I was making and the whole thing.

When Joan gave up her business to go into real estate, her husband again demonstrated a lack of support, again until she was a financial success.

> And it was the same when I was in real estate. When I started I took my real estate course – well that was when my son, David, had his accident and everything so I didn't do anything with real estate for about six months. When I actually got into it, it took me six months to make my first sale. Well that whole six months all I got from my husband and his friends was, 'Ha, ha! Did you sell anything today?' They really gave me a bad time about it. And I was just stubborn enough that I was going to hang in there. And the money was not a big thing at that time. I didn't really need it. And then I did start selling and I've done really well at it. Now he's talking me up to all his friends and it's, 'Oh yeah, you're really good' and all this kind of thing. But there was no support at the beginning, like, 'Yes Joan, you can do it.' It was, 'Who the hell is going to buy a house from you? What do you know about real estate?' And even now – like I've been selling it for about four years – and even now he'll make me mad sometimes. Because if we're in a crowd or with a bunch of people and somebody'll ask me about real estate, which they always do, I'll start talking, and he'll break right in, and oh yes, he knows about this and he knows about that. He's never taken any kind of course in his life but it almost makes me feel that I don't know shit–all – I don't know anything about it. He still has to be kind of one–up on me. But that could be my own feeling too. Like I don't really know if he really means it or not.

Joan describes an incident which demonstrates her husband's continued disbelief in her success.

> But I know it does kind of irk him that I make the money that I do. Well last year was a good example. I made $20,000, which is pretty good for being in real estate around here because it's just dead here. We were sitting around the table one night, him and his friend that always bugs me about real estate, and he said something about 'Oh, there's very few people in real estate in this town that actually make it.' And I said, 'Well I made $20,000 last year.' 'Oh bullshit!' So it just happened that I had a receipt in my purse from my last paycheque and I hauled it out and it was $19,900 and something. Well they both sat there kind of, 'Duh!' But until then he didn't believe me. Until I had actually shown, he didn't believe that I'd made that kind of money.

Joan perceives that related to her husband's lack of support and disbelief in her ability to make money, is his own insecurity and need to be superior, which she experiences as a competitive attitude on his part.

> Like he still has to be kind of the grand poobah around there, and everything that he does is probably a little bit better than what I do. Like if I went out and sold a $500,000 farm or something it still wouldn't be as good as him buying a cat. Do you know what I mean? Well, rightfully so maybe, he still is the breadwinner, fine. If he wants to feel that way, fine with me, but don't put me down for what I'm doing because I do quite well selling real estate. Like I don't want to be the sole breadwinner – I wouldn't want to support him. So if he wants to feel that he is supporting us – oh, I don't really know what I mean. I'm not trying to beat him. I don't feel that it's a competition that, 'Okay, I made $30,000 this year and you made $25,000 so I'm the best.' I don't feel like that. But I don't feel that he should think he's in competition with me. If I did make say, $50,000 selling real real estate this year, I would never go, 'Ha, ha, ha! I made $50,000 and what did you make?' It doesn't mean that much to me, the money angle. Like I feel that he sort of has to one-up me all the time. In a lot of things, not just in money. Like if I do go out one evening, the next night he *has* to go out. We've been married fifteen years and I can almost know that if I go out Wednesday night, he's going to go out Thursday night. He's not going to come home for supper. It's just almost kind of showing me that he is the boss. It's a very subtle thing. He's never come right out and said, 'Look, I'm the boss and you're nothing,' but that's the impression I get. I'm not in competition with him. At least I don't think I am, but I don't try to be. But I think maybe he feels that I am. I'm not really in competition with anybody but myself and a few of the other real estate people around town. But I don't actively try to be in competition with him. I never rub his nose in what I make. If he's had a bad month I never say, 'Well I made $4000 last month.' I don't rub it in or anything and most of my money goes towards the house and what we're doing anyway, so I don't know.

As Joan explains what she would like her marriage relationship to be, it becomes clear that she sees her difficulties as a personal problem rather than as a consequence of institutionalized inequality.

> I feel like I'd like to be partners, not in competition. I've never really thought of it as me being a woman though. I've just sort of thought of it as me being me. I don't know. I just don't like it. I would like to be treated as an equal. I think the marriage should be a partnership, not one being the boss and the other being the servant; one being the Chief and one being the Indian sort of thing. I think it should be a partnership. And sometimes it is, sometimes it isn't.

The difficulty of resolving the problem is further complicated by the fact that Joan and Joe never discuss it openly. Rather Joe seems to act on the assumption that he is 'the boss' and Joan resents his actions and wonders about his intentions. Further, feelings are not discussed.

> But it's sort of his decisions that we do. If we were going to move, it's his decision that we're going to move to such and such a place. I don't know what would happen if I ever flatly refused to move. Like now, I really like this town. I like living here and if he said we were moving to wherever, I don't really know what would happen if I said, 'No, I'm not moving.' I hope it doesn't ever come up. I don't know if it would mean a heck of a lot to him. I have told him that I have no intention of moving, because of the kids and because of my work and the whole bit. I just don't want to move. But I don't know. I just would like it to be a partnership.
> We don't talk a lot about stuff like that – like about our feelings. We talk a lot about the kids and about different business deals and things like that, but we don't talk about our own feelings. There's a real communication gap there.

Adding to the difficulty Joan experiences regarding the double standard in her marriage, is the fact that Joe has support in his desire to be 'the boss' from his friends and brother, whom Joan perceives to be male chauvinists. She describes how these men put her down and make fun of her when she steps out of a passive, feminine role, and how she fights back.

> I kind of feel a little put down sometimes, and I think it's because I'm a woman. I get that from some of his friends. His friends are fairly chauvinistic, a couple of them anyway. And his brother is extremely chauvinistic. And I feel that they sort of put me down for that reason. They don't want to see me get ahead. They kind of make fun of me in a way. I could speak for three hours on my brother-in-law. When they made Archie Bunker, they followed Gerald around. He's always said that I wear the pants in the family, which is wrong! But he just doesn't agree with anything that I do or say. But Gerald and I, I think that 99 percent of it is just a personality conflict. I don't agree with anything he does or says either. Like his wife is sort of very put down, and he's always made her feel that she's stupid. And she's not! But after you've been told this for twenty years I think you get the impression that maybe you are stupid. And this is how Gerald has treated Yvonne all this time. That she's stupid, and that's that. He tries to pull that with me but I won't put up with it. We've sat up all night a couple of times fighting, and I will fight back whereas his wife won't. I'll sit there and argue back with him and I think that just drives him crazy. So I really argue.

While Joan is able to argue with her brother-in-law, she seems less able to speak directly to her husband. She does resent his attitude, however, as we see from her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?" Again, however, Joan's uncertainty about Joe's intentions is evident.

> Probably the only one that I ever have built up a resentment to is my husband, and I resent him telling me, 'No, you can't do something.' Well he never says no I can't do something, but he gets that look on his face that I could just wipe off, every once in awhile. I still go ahead and do it but I feel guilty about doing it. I guess I do sort of resent. Yeah, I sort of resent that but Joe tries to tell me that it's not him, it's me. That / feel that way. That he's not really disapproving of everything I do, that / feel that he's disapproving. And he's probably right. But I still resent sometimes; he'll get this look on his face and I could just kind of smack him. He gets this really put upon look. I don't know. I can't even describe the look, but when I want to do something he'll get this look on his face and I just think, 'Oooh!' I just really resent that.

Further, that Joan experiences conflict not just with her husband but also with herself in her marriage, is evidenced in her perception of herself as someone who does not hold a grudge against others. In her answer to the question, "What do you value about yourself?" she states:

> I don't hold a grudge against people – I think that's a good thing. I don't sort of build up resentments towards people. I like that I can go out, and it's probably not exactly the right way to let off steam, but I can go out and get drunk and scream and yell and I don't hold a grudge kind of against people. I don't like a person that holds a grudge. I think that's stupid. Life's too short for that kind of thing, you know, hating someone all your life kind of. Like if I don't like a person, I won't walk up to them and say, 'Hey, I don't like you.' But if I have a problem with someone I can usually go up and say, 'Hey, we're not getting along too well. What's the problem?' And talk about it. Something like that.

The double standard Joan experiences in her marriage is also evident to her as a woman in the business world. She explains that in residential real estate she may be at an advantage because she is a woman. However, she believes she would have difficulty getting into commercial real estate because in that area being a woman is a distinct disadvantage.

> I also feel that kind of double standard a little bit in the business world. Not too much. Like I sell mainly residential real estate and with that there's no difference if you're a man or a woman. It doesn't make any difference. I think sometimes women have a bit of an advantage over men in residential real estate because we work mainly with women. Like a woman, I don't care what anybody says, the woman buys the house. So that's good. And that's pretty well what I've sold. But I find in commercial real estate it's very hard to have men believe you. There are very few women realtors that sell commercial real estate and do well at it. I really don't know of too many, and I know a lot of women in Edmonton. I want to get into commercial real estate but it's really hard to have someone believe you can spend $3,000,000 and do it successfully. I find that any of the big deals tend to go to the men. I think they feel more comfortable with them or something. Like we've always been brought up to believe that men handle the money and I think if someone's going to be spending two or three million dollars, I think they feel more comfortable with a man. And I've argued with people about this but I still think I'm right. That they just don't believe you. They don't believe that you know enough about it to do it. That makes me mad! I feel that if I have the ability and if I know – if I can do the research and find out about the building and all the financial aspects of it, that it shouldn't be a double standard. They shouldn't go to some guy that maybe doesn't even know as much. But they probably will, because I'm a woman. That really makes me mad, that they don't trust you spending that much money, or helping them spend that much money. That really does make me mad, yes. And I think it's partially our own fault. That a lot of women in real estate don't do their homework, they don't know the ins and outs of selling a commercial building, and that could be part of it. Because the women that do sell commercial real estate are very successful at it. But they are extremely bright and they do their homework, they research the whole project before they even approach anyone, and men will tend to believe them. But it's very hard to get into it.

Advancing in commercial real estate would also be hard for Joan, she believes, because of the attitude she anticipates on the part of her husband toward her travelling away from home.

> And then too, like in commercial real estate, you're flying off to Vancouver, or you're flying off to Saskatoon to work on a deal. That wouldn't go over too well in our house. And with the kids I don't know if I really want it to or not. Yeah, I would kind of. I would like to be able to be phoning my husband and saying, 'Well I'll be down in Vancouver for a couple of days working on this thing.' But I know darn well I could never do it. His reaction would be just straight up. Like there's no way. And especially with these type of deals, you're usually going down with the client. Well I mean he could just go straight up if I said, 'I'm going down with Harry to Calgary for a couple of days. I'll see you on Thursday.' I'd be going to Calgary alright, and I wouldn't be coming back.

Even working in residential real estate Joan finds that there can be problems for women. Her behavior can be misinterpreted as a sexual invitation because she is engaging in behavior once defined as inappropriate for 'ladies'.

> Sex gets in the way for women I think – in this business. Because it's happened to me that I've very innocently said to some guy that I've been selling a house to, 'Well let's go down and have a drink and talk this situation over.' And all of a sudden, boom! They're making a pass at you or they're getting the wrong idea. A lot of deals are made in bars and it's pretty hard for me to say to a guy, 'Well come on, let's go down and I'll buy you a beer, or I'll buy you a drink.' I've done it and all of a sudden the sex thing comes into it. Like, 'Hey, she's not selling real estate, she's hustling me,' kind of thing. So I think that's where women are at a real disadvantage to selling commercial real estate.

Joan's reaction to this varies – it can feel good, or it can make her angry.

> Sometimes it's okay, you know. Like it depends on who it is and what the circumstances are. I can generally handle them quite well. I don't get insulted by it. No, I don't get insulted by it, but then maybe my standards are different than others'. I think some people would get insulted but it doesn't bother me. It makes me feel kind of good in a way. Kind of fun and flirty. It's an ego trip sometimes, that guys, especially ones that are pretty successful and well-to-do – it's a bit of an ego trip that they would think that I'm not all that bad, I'm not fat and ugly and all the rest of it. Sometimes it kind of makes you mad because you're trying to do business and they're busy trying to play kneesies under the table. But I don't know, I just sort of keep on with business and they eventually get the idea.

However, on the positive side, as stated earlier, Joan believes that being a woman is an advantage in residential real estate. Her experience tells her that women are the buyers of houses, and that as a woman she understands what women are looking for. From her own experience she understands women's fears about buying a house, and comments on the differences she perceives in male and female buyers. She also has learned that women realtors do not pressure people into buying the way male realtors do, and surmises about the possible causes of this perceived difference.

> Generally women get along better with people than men do. I think we are more understanding than men. I can be totally irrational too, but I think men can be totally irrational. I don't know. Well, like sometimes I'll have a young couple come in and they're scared to death and for some reason I can pick that up, that they are terrified of buying a house. And I don't know if men do or not. I think men sometimes – maybe it's a position that we put

men in, but I think they're sometimes more concerned with the commission. They have to make that commission so they're gonna get those kids in that house, regardless. Whereas I think I'll take a little bit more time with them and kind of ease their fears. Like, 'Hey, you are doing the right thing. Why rent for five years if you can own it and it's only going to cost you $100 more.' I think women can sort of put them at ease a little bit better. Because you know that they're just scared out of their minds. Whereas men aren't supposed to be afraid so they kind of bluff their way through. But you know they're just terrified, and I think I can understand them. I don't know, maybe I'm wrong, but men are always supposed to be big, macho, don't cry, 'Hey, I can buy a house, it's no big deal.' But then you start talking to their wives and you realize that these kids are terrified. They're scared of being ripped off by the real estate salesperson, they're scared of buying a house that's going to fall down in a year, they're scared of big mortgage payments. And you can't blame them; it's a scary thing, buying; it's your first big commitment. Most people, it's their only big commitment. But I think women can feel that they are afraid and can just kind of understand that, 'Hey, I've gone through it too.' Because I was terrified when we first started building houses and buying houses, and my husband never seemed to be. Like I was always afraid of the big mortgage payments and, 'Oh my God, what are we getting ourselves in for?' Whereas he never seemed to be. He was sort of, 'Oh well, hell, it'll all turn out. We can do it.' And I was thinking, 'Gee, we've got two kids. How are we going to put food on the table and things like that, if our mortgage is so big?' I think it is the women that worry a little bit more about the basic, everyday things, like, 'How are we going to pay the power bill, the phone bill, the groceries, the clothes for the kids, things like that?' Whereas men seem to, or some men rather, seem to kind of gloss over it and 'Oh yeah, well it's always going to come in; it's always going to be there.' It's not being masculine to worry about putting food on the table sort of thing. They're going to do it and that's it. Whereas women are, I think, a little bit more cautious about things like that. Like selling just a woman a house is a lot harder than selling just to a man, Like I've sold to two or three single guys, and no problem. They like the house: 'Well, it can be fixed up, I've got the money, no problem.' A woman will just hesitate and just really think it all over and she'll work out all her pay and things like that. She's way more cautious. And she'll have someone come and look at the house to make sure that it's structurally sound. Whereas a man – it's almost an insult to him to have someone else give him a second opinion. Like he can do it himself. But a woman is, 'Gee, should I?' or 'I want another opinion.' Well, I don't know about the salesmen, but I know I've had women that have come to me and said they feel more comfortable buying from me. That they have looked at houses with other men and they felt more pressured into buying. It seems like the men sort of, 'Well, I'm a man and if I tell you to buy this house, you should buy it.' This is the impression that they told me, anyway, that they felt a lot more pressured to buy it. Whereas with me, we sort of talked things over and if they say, 'Well, can I get my dad to come and look at it?' 'Fine!' Whereas a man will say, 'You don't need your father. Can't you make up your own mind?' They just feel more pressured and I've had two or three women tell me that – that they would prefer to deal with a woman buying a house. Maybe we don't pressure as much. Because if we make the sale, fine. If we don't make the sale, well, I'm not going to starve. Actually that's a good way to be in real estate sometimes, because the more you pressure, the more you screw things up.

Generally speaking, Joan enjoys her career in real estate, feeling it suits her personality and needs.

> But I really enjoy selling real estate. I get really frustrated with it and I stomp around the office and I yell and scream and swear and curse and everything, but I think I'm the type of person that should do this because I'm either up or down and that's the way I am with everything. I'm either extremely up or extremely down. I'm never at a happy medium. And if I don't have anything to worry about, I'll makes things up, by worrying about business deals and all this kind of stuff. I don't like inactivity. I like to be busy all the time, and with real estate you're as busy as you want to be. And I'm pretty good at being a self-motivator, which is really important in real estate. You've got to be able to do it yourself; you can't have someone pushing you the whole time. And I don't like someone pushing me the whole time, but I can do it myself. Sometimes when I get really down I have a bit of a problem getting back up, but then things will start to go right and I'm really flying. Of all the things I've ever done, this is the one that I've enjoyed the most. Like I couldn't work in an office nine-to-five again, and have somebody tell me what to do and when I can take my coffee break and when I can take my lunch break. I'd probably stroll out the door about ten in the morning and say, 'Well, see you guys,' and forget that there was someone telling me what to do. Whereas this way if I want to go to Edmonton or if I want to do anything, I can do it. I just have to schedule my appointments and my time and I can do whatever I want to do. I'm not stuck. It's a feeling of freedom. It's a good feeling that I'm doing it on my own and it's my own ability. I really like it.

Meeting people and being appreciated for her work is also part of why Joan finds satisfaction in her career.

> Also in real estate, you meet a lot of nice people. You meet a lot of really weird ones too, but generally they're pretty nice. And the people I have met through real estate have all become friends and I like that part of it. The people I sell houses to have generally become my friends and I see them all the time and I can have coffee with them. I can walk into their houses and I don't feel that they're going to shoot me or lock the door or anything, when they see me coming. We're on a very friendly basis and they've always been pleased with the work I've done. So that makes you feel good. When they send you thank-you cards and I've had people buy me bottles of wine and one lady bought me a sweater, it makes you feel good that you've helped then enough that they think that you've really helped them. It's just the little extra things that you do that is just good for business I guess, but it makes you feel good when they do that. You feel that they appreciate you. That's the big thing I think, is they appreciate what you've done for them. It makes you feel good.

As well, it appears that the aspects of herself that Joan values suit her career in real estate. In answer to the question, "What do you value about yourself?" she stated:

> Probably the biggest thing is the ability to get along with people. I think that is what I value most. Because you've got to have people - you've got to have other people and be open with people. I'm generally quite open with people. I think that's good. Like I try to be honest. There are so many unhonest people in this world that it's every once in awhile I get to the point where I don't trust anybody, I don't trust what anybody says. And I don't think that's right. I think a person should trust what someone else says. Like if you say to me, 'I like you,' I should be able to take your word for it, that you do like me. I shouldn't question; I shouldn't have to question. And there are so many people in this world that are - they sort of tell you what you want to hear. And I try not to do that. I try to tell them how I feel rather than what they want to hear. And I think that's important. Because you've got to trust people. Like I generally trust people until they do something to me to make me not trust them. But I'm almost too trusting sometimes and end up getting it in the left ear. But still you have to keep on trusting people. You can't just

> say, 'Well because So-and-so lied to me, everyone is lying to me.' You've got to. And so I feel that if I'm honest, they should be honest. And I think more people are. If you're honest with them, they're honest with you.
> I generally get along quite well with people. Yeah, I generally get along quite well with people. Like they seem to like me - I don't know quite why. That makes me feel good. I really like that, that I can usually walk into a coffee shop or anywhere and, 'Hi! How are you doing?' Things like that. I like that. That makes me feel good.
> And I feel that I'm pretty down to earth. I'm not a snob. And I can talk to just about anybody.

However, while Joan perceives herself as able to talk to and get along with most people, she admits that she sometimes feels uncomfortable with certain individuals, these generally being financially successful women.

> It doesn't bother me that much - like not that many people can psych me out. There's a few that can psych me out but not too many people. I feel just as comfortable with some people that are multi-millionaires as I do with someone that is on welfare. I don't feel that I am a snob. I can relate to just about anybody. There's a few people that can psych me out but not too many. They're generally the type of people that are in authority I guess. Or I don't know who really. Like there's no sort of specifics. Just every once in awhile I'll come across a person that just really psychs me out and I don't really know why they bother me. I feel very ill at ease around them and like they're sort of looking down on me, but there's no particular type of person. It's just different individuals can do it. Generally they're the ones with a lot of money and they're generally women. Not too many men can do it. But it's generally women and I don't know why they do. Usually not too much bothers me.

While not many people make Joan feel uncomfortable, there are aspects of herself which bother her to a degree. In answer to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?" she explains how her being impatient can be a disadvantage at work.

> I don't like the fact that I'm very impatient. When I want something I want it *now*! That's not all that good, especially in the business I'm in. Sometimes it doesn't happen right now, and I get so frustrated with it. Because I generally make reasonably snap decisions and I think other people should too. So I don't like my impatience. Sometimes I can screw things up. Like I know that I am impatient - that that's one of my problems. So if I get really impatient now I'll try to go for a walk or go do something else while I'm waiting for whatever it is that's supposed to happen. And so I'm getting a little bit better at handling that. But it's still hard.

In a similar vein, and in answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?" Joan describes a feeling she has which again she sees as not serious.

> I generally feel that I'm pretty well in control and I'm doing pretty well what I want to do. Well, sometimes with a business deal, some guy decides not to sell or some guy decides not to buy. There's not a hell of a lot I can do about that, so that's kind of a feeling of being powerless I guess. Because I don't think that I could ever actively talk anybody into selling their house or into buying one if they didn't want to buy it. So that's sort of a feeling of powerless but I don't think of it along those lines.

Disliking the sense of being under another's control is manifest in Joan's behavior in

other ways too. She explains:

> I feel very helpless, when I fly – like I'm not in control. And I sure hope that dingaling in the front seat knows what he's doing. I don't like flying and I think that part of the reason is because I feel very out of control. Like I'm relying on someone else and I don't like the feeling. The same with driving in a way. I don't know if this is what you mean or not but when I'm driving in a car, if I'm driving everything's fine; when someone else is driving I've got my foot to the floor and I'm hanging on for dear life because I like that feeling that I'm in control. And when I'm sitting beside someone driving or when I'm flying, I don't have that feeling and I don't like it. Like I'm sure I could probably go and take flying lessons and feel a lot better about flying because I like being up there, I like looking out the window. But I don't like the idea that my life is in someone else's hands.

Another aspect of herself that Joan dislikes is the emotional cycling she experiences as part of her menstrual cycle. She recognizes that during the premenstrual stage she becomes more emotional and reacts differently at work. However, she appears to have accepted this aspect of herself and has learned to adjust her expectations at these times.

> And I get very emotional sometimes – overly emotional and overly critical of myself. And then it's not too good because I tend to do stupid things that I shouldn't have done, such as phoning someone and yelling at them. I had no business doing it to begin with but I'll do it and then I'll think afterwards, 'Oh God! What a stupid thing to do!' But I'm getting better at that too. Like I know, it seems to me that it's about a week before my periods that I get extremely emotional. And I've sort of learned now that it is about this week and it usually lasts for about three or four days. Okay, so those three or four days I'll try, I'll really try my hardest to keep busy and not let things bother me and try to just keep working. And I know as soon as I have my period it'll all sort of go away and I'll be back to being kind of Joe Cool or whatever. But for those three or four days I just about die. I get really uptight and really emotional and impatient. Like I just ache! Sometimes if something doesn't happen, I could just scream. And if somebody looks at me the wrong way I'm in tears. But I have learned. Well that's certainly related to being a woman too. Women really do go through emotional – or / go through emotional ups and downs. But it's taken me a long time to realize that. Like if I'll start to get really upset about something I'll start looking at the calendar, 'Oh yeah! Cool it for the next two or three days. Try not to get involved in anything and just play it cool and try not to fight.' Like I say, if I get too upset I think to myself, 'Well, next week you'll feel better about it.' Or I'll try not to make any rash decisions until next week. I find that since I realize this about myself that I can handle it better. But it took me a long time to realize that I do get super emotional at that time. But it does help now that I know because like I say, I can cope with it a lot better.

The aspect of herself that seems to Joan to be most problematic is her body image – what she is *supposed to* look like. She explains that she would like to be slim and trim, and to look more successful.

> Well I dislike that I weigh 20 pounds too much and I can't seem to lose it. It means that I feel uncomfortable. I would really like to be in shape. Like I go up those stairs and I'm puffing by the time I get to the top of the stairs. And I would like to be slim and trim and be able to wear nice clothes and things like that. It's an ego thing I think, so people will look at me and say, 'Hey! 35 years old? She's in good shape!' That kind of thing. I don't like being kind of fat and flabby. But I obviously don't dislike it enough or I'd do something about it. I keep trying, and I've never got past Wednesday on a diet. Something will happen and I'll say, 'Ah, the hell with the diet,' and I'll have a pizza. But I don't like being fat and every once in awhile I'll try to make a conscious effort to lose weight. I don't know. I just can't seem to do it. It used to not be any problem. I'd go on a diet and I'd stick with it and I'd lose what I had to lose and it would creep back up. But this time I'm really having a hard time losing the weight. And it bothers me that I don't have enough self-control to leave the pizzas alone, and the booze. Like I drink a fair amount. I'm not an alcoholic or anything but I do like to drink. And that sort of thing bothers me that I can't say that I'm going on a diet and stay to it. I just can't seem to do it.
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> I don't like my hair either. I don't like my appearance. I can't do anything with my hair. It just kind of, you know, like I go down and I get hot oil treatments and it doesn't seem to do any good. And I can't seem to get a good haircut. I just get very dissatisfied with myself and I want to make a change and I don't seem to know how to go about it. Like I think, 'Gee whiz! I've finally now got the time and the money to be able to do it and I don't know how to go do it.' Or buying nice clothes. I haven't for so many years that I don't know how to begin now. Like I'd like to take some kind of course or something in how to get with it. I want to have nice clothes; I want to be slim and trim. I want to portray a successful image I guess is what it is. Like I've been to so many courses now on self-motivation and motivation courses and stuff, and you always have to have this image. Well I don't think my image is what I'm supposed to be. Like it should be a different type of image. Like a little bit more successful and things like that. But I also don't want to take the time that it involves to do it too, because that's a lot of work.

Joan sometimes thinks she'd like to change careers. She thinks she's be a good building contractor, because as a woman she'd be aware of what women like in a house. She perceives, however, that women are actively discouraged from entering this so-called male career - by bank managers who hesitate to lend money to women; and by mens' assumption that women are incapable of handling this kind of work.

> Every once in a while I get fed up with real estate and I think, 'Oh, I'm going to quit.' And then I think,'What else would I do?' There's nothing else that interests me as much as this job. Well, selling something else, but I don't even know what else I could sell. I couldn't sell cars, couldn't sell life insurance, so real estate it is. But I just think probably if I wanted to be a builder, I'd be a damn good builder, because I would build what women want in a house. And let's face it, women are still the ones that live in a house most of the time. So I think I'd do quite well. But I think I'd have a hard time getting somebody to back me with a million dollars or so to go out and build these houses. Whereas I think a man going down to the bank wouldn't have that much problem because they're men. For me it's an untraditional thing to do, whereas for men, they're expected to do that sort of thing. It's the same with installing ceramic tile. I did a lot better job than some of the men, because women are a little bit more picky and will do things sometimes three times, whereas a man slams it on the first time and if it doesn't fit he hits it with a hammer. Whereas a woman will cut around it and things like that. A little bit more patience, a little bit maybe more pride in their work or something. Whereas a man, he'll just walk through and slap her on the wall and give you a curb guarantee - it's guaranteed till he gets to the curb.

> Because I did very well installing ceramic tile. And you clean the bathtub out after and little things like that– a little bit of extra. Men, they just leave all this junk where it is. It's beneath them to clean out the bathtub. It still is sometimes. But you know, if I was a man I would probably be three times as successful. I would be a contractor because that's always what I've wanted to do. And if I had been a man I probably would be a very successful builder right now. But the society wouldn't allow it before; they probably would now. Now I could probably become a builder if I wanted to be. People probably wouldn't even know that it was a woman building that house. Because I found out that you don't have to be God to build a house. All you have to do is hire sub–trades. It's very simple! But this is it: until a woman gets in the business world, you think everything that men do is so hard. And it's not at all! All you have to do is hire other people to do it. But you have to know how to coordinate it, and it's not hard. And men, all these years, have led us to believe that what they're doing is really tricky and really hard and they don't think women could probably handle that sort of thing. – Whereas a lot of times I think women could handle it better.

Joan explains that at one time she would have like to attend university but her parents couldn't afford to send her. Instead she took advantage of what government grants were available – in her case, business college – and became a secretary. However, she takes responsibility for not attending university, labelling herself as lazy.

> I couldn't go to university because, well, we just didn't have the money. There was just no way that we had the money. I got a government grant to go through business college and I thought at the time, 'Hey, working in an office would be alright.' And I got about half–way thought business college and I thought, 'Jesus! I don't want to work in an office!' But I continued on and I did work in an office for five years. But if I had to do it over again I would like to have been a professional, like a lawyer or an engineer or something like that. I know I still could if I wanted to badly enough, but it doesn't mean quite as much to me anymore and I keep thinking of all the work it would involve. I'm kind of basically lazy, too. But I would like that for my daughter, but she doesn't even want it. So I just have to keep telling myself that she's a different person than I am and let her do whatever she wants to do. But yeah, I would have liked to have gone and I guess be somebody, rather than just a wife and mother. I think that's why I really like selling real estate – I feel like I am somebody. Generally I think real estate is one of the professions where you're, other than the commercial angle, you're generally treated as an equal. There's no kind of discrimination until you get into the big time, and then you're discriminated against. But what I'm doing right now, I certainly don't feel discriminated against at any time.

That not going to university is an important issue to Joan is validated by her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?" Again she blames herself.

> Well I regret that I didn't go to school, to university, because probably if I would have really wanted to I could have. I could have worked my way through. I regret that, that I didn't give the extra effort. Because I'm sure that if I would have really, really wanted to bad enough, I could have done it. Other than that I don't regret or resent too much.

In spite of her regrets about not having attended university and her thoughts about other careers, it is evident that Joan's career in real estate is very important to her from her answer to the question, "In what ways have you exerienced yourself as powerful?" She describes her feelings of being important, having knowledge, and being

able to effect change in others' lives.

> I love power! Oh, I could go on for days about power. I like the feeling of power. To me I think it's an ego trip. It does wonders for your ego. When I bought that real estate company, no matter how small and insignificant it actually was, I had a real feeling of power by owning it. I didn't get any money out of it, but it was more the ego thing. Like I was *someone*! When I was younger, when I was about 10 I guess, we bought a house through real estate through a woman, and it always impressed the socks right off me. And growing up in B.C. with Block Brothers, I learned about real estate. I've always had a different impression than a lot of people have. A lot of people think they're crooks and out to cheat you and the whole bit, but I never had that. I always had the impression that they were sort of, not semi-god, but they were right up there. I mean it was a profession and it was somebody to look up to and I always have. And now that I am, every once in awhile I sort of pinch myself and 'Hey!' you know. It's sort of a power thing. Because a young couple will come in and you talk to them about mortgages and interest rates and amortization and all of these words that they don't know what you're talking about. It's a good feeling – like I can help them buy a house and they really like it, and I feel good about it. And to me that's a power trip. That's probably why I like being in business. It's the feeling of power.
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> Power to me means the power probably to change things, to do things. It also goes with a lot of money. To me, maybe I'm wrong, but I feel that people that are millionaires and multi-millionaires have power. They can change people's lives. To me I guess that's it – changing people's lives. When you sell them a house or when you sell their house, you're changing their life. If somebody comes in and he's just renting a house or something and he wants to buy a house, I am in effect changing their life. They are stuck with that god-awful mortgage or whatever it is now. It's a whole life change for them, whether they realize it at the time or not. And most of them don't realize it at the time, that this is going to be a life change, but it is. I mean, all of a sudden you've gone from no responsibilities and renting, to owning something – responsibilities, having to make payments. To me that's a power thing. You sell somebody's farm, you're changing their lifestyle. And that's a power thing.

Another aspect of power that appeals to Joan is recognition and status. She names people whom she admires, and also describes when she experienced recognition and status. She concludes by saying that she has only felt powerful in her work, never in her home or over her children.

> And when people kind of look up to you, that's a power thing. And I look up to people that are successful, in business especially. I really look up to them. I think they're powerful. They've made a lot of money; they've done a lot of things – it's power! And like I admire people like Nelson Skalbania and Peter Pocklington and Elena Skalbania, Nelson's wife. I would just love to meet that lady. She's a multi-millionaire in her own right; she owns 50 percent share of the Hotel Georgia and she owned it before she married Nelson – like it's a second wife. And I think that's super! They're in a position where they can change the stock market. Like that guy two days ago – I can't remember his name – but on his advice the whole stock market took a dive. People like that, I would love to be in that position. I know, I doubt very much if I ever will, but I would love to be in that position.
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> And it's an ego trip too. Like when I owned the Century 21 franchise, and I'd go into the different classes that we had in Edmonton, and these salespeople would talk – like we were all in the same classes and stuff and I was an agent. Well being an agent in real estate is the big time. It's a little bit above being a salesman. Well I felt good about it. They said, 'Oh! You're an

> agent! And you own part of a company!' And I felt good. If they would have know how much money we made and the actual operation of the whole thing, it was not that great, but to them I was really doing well. It was a status thing. Being recognized I guess. Recognition! Status! But recognition I think is a bit more. Because whenever we had a class or something, they would always ask the brokers to stand up. 'Well here I am!' sort of thing. And then all these people that had just gotten into real estate would kind of look at you with awe. 10 years down the road they won't, but then they did. Like I was very in awe of people that owned real estate companies and were agents when I first started. Now I'm not. I think, 'You poor sucker!' But then I was and that was the same thing with me. They treated me with awe. So it was a status symbol.
>
> But I think the only way I've ever been powerful is in the business sense of it. I never really feel powerful around home or anything, or over my kids or that. I can't think of any other situation where I was sort of powerful or sensed that I was.

There was a time in Joan's life, when she was working in her home full-time as a homemaker and as caretaker of her two small children, when a sense of power was lacking, and when in fact, she felt very dissatisfied. Ironically, before describing this time in her life, Joan again speaks of being a person, free to do as she pleases.

> I don't know, I've always thought of myself as being a person; I've always sort of done what I've wanted to do. Well, when we first got married I wasn't allowed to work, sort of thing. Well, I was allowed to work for the first two years I was married because we really needed the money. Like we were broke and if I hadn't of worked, boy, we would have really been in trouble. I had my daughter and then I went right back to work. Then I quit when she was about two. I quit work and then I had my son and then my husband didn't want me to go back to work. And I just about went crazy. I hated staying home. I felt that I was a second class citizen and I just hated it. I really hated staying home! And I felt that it was really unfair.
> We used to really have some good fights about me not working. I used to feel very put down and I don't know, I just wanted to go out and work. I wasn't happy staying at home. I'm not a Suzy Homemaker type. I was for awhile. Like when the kids were just little I baked my own bread and I canned and I washed walls and floors and all the rest of that, and I didn't like it. It's very blah! It doesn't need a lot of imagination or anything. But I sort of went through that and I know I couldn't ever go back to doing that.

Although Joan's husband's desire for her to stay home with the children, once he was making enough money to support them, appears at first to have been the reason she did this, Joan describes other factors which influenced her decision. At age 23 she was easily influenced and afraid to fight back, she had learned as a child that this is what is expected of women, she believed that her children would be better off with their natural mother, and besides, everyone else she knew was doing it too.

> I could never stay home now 24 hours a day, and just be a mother and a wife and that sort of thing. I couldn't do that. But I was a lot younger then and I guess maybe you just don't know any better when you're - like I was about 23, 24 years old, and that's what we were raised to be. Like I always thought I was kind of different because I wanted to go out to work and I didn't like staying home. And you know how we were brought up: Johnny goes to work and Suzy stays home and does house work, and it's right back to the old school where women were mothers and teachers and secretaries, and

> men were the fun things. I think I was sort of conditioned at that time. Like in school readers, we could be nurses and we could be stewardesses and we could be mothers, well mainly mothers, and all that sort of thing. And I think when I was 23 or 24 and Joe was telling me I had to stay home, I didn't like it but I thought, 'Well yeah, for the good of the children.' I have found out that for the good of the children I should have probably worked all the time because I'm not happy staying at home. I'm a lot happier person when I am out working. So probably if I would have gone back when I was 23 or 24 and gone to work, I would have been a lot better off, and so would have the kids.
> But most of my friends at that time, they didn't work neither. So we all sat around and complained about it but there wasn't a heck of a lot we could do about it. We were too young and stupid to actually put our foot down and say, 'Bullshit! I'm going back to work!' You know, you didn't like to rock the boat because they can make it pretty miserable for you.

The effect on Joan of doing a job she didn't like, i.e., staying home with two small children, was extremely negative. She describes how she felt and behaved and what action she eventually took.

> I had become extremely depressed before this. Really depressed! Like I'd get up in the morning and I'd make breakfast and I'd go back to bed and sort of half sleep and cry, and the kids would be running around. At lunch time I'd get up and I'd make lunch and as soon as I got everything staightened around I'd go back to bed. Finally I realized that this was dumb, and I went to the doctor and he gave me some mood elevators and that seemed to work. And he told me – he was the one that really recommended that I get out of the house. And that kind of helped. I told Joe about what the doctor had said, and that helped immensely.

Thus, with the support of her doctor Joan made a change in her life. She describes what going back to work meant to her.

> I finally did go back when my son was about three. I went back just part-time as a cashier in a grocery store. And I really like it.
> Even when I went back to work part-time, it meant that I had a little bit more freedom. I had my own spending money, I was out of the house. I think I worked 20 hours a week or something. I was out of the house; I was meeting new people. I felt a lot better about myself, that I was meeting new people.
> I felt good about going back to work. I've always been really independent and I felt like I don't like to be dependent upon anyone. Before when I was, it was, 'Can I have five dollars for this?' Like he never has ever given me a big hassle about money. Anything I've ever wanted to spend on myself, fine. But I always felt kind of that I could never do it. The kids always came first and I could never go out and spend anything on me. When I had my own money, that's different! That's my money, sort of thing, or it was then. That was my money! So if I wanted to go downtown and blow $10, I could. That gave me a really good feeling of independence and I really liked it. And just the getting out and meeting people and I don't know, it just made me feel good.

The issue about her husband's lack of support again becomes relevant, an issue Joan discovered she shared with her women friends at work.

> Like we talked about this, just the girls that work here. We've talked about it and we've all said that when we first started back to work our husbands made it really rotten. Like, 'Fine, you can go back to work as long as it doesn't disrupt our five o'clock supper and our ironed shirts in the closet and things like that. So whatever you want, as long as our lives are not interrupted.' And when I first started back to work Joe said, 'Fine, but the house is going to be kept so-and-so, and the kids are going to be kept so-and-so.' So I tried to do it. I tried to be Mrs.Perfect, with home-baked bread still, and the floors - you could see your face in the floor, and have the kids perfect all the time. Over the years I've slipped into a routine where I don't make home-baked bread anymore, and he's gotten a lot better too. But at that time when I did start back to work part-time I was really working hard, trying to do everything up to his standards. And I think sometimes he even made it a little bit harder because his standards aren't that great. Like he doesn't care if everything is perfect, but I think he made it a little bit harder for me to go back to work. I think he felt threatened by it.

Joan became conscious of a feeling underlying her husband's lack of support - his fear of her leaving when she had enough money to support herself and the children.

> One thing he said a couple of years ago really kind of bothered me. I don't know, we were talking about money or something one day and he said, 'Well I know that as soon as you have enough money, you're going to leave.' And I had never thought of it, but he thinks that. Now whether that's what he's been brought up to believe or the impression I've given him,' I don't know. But he had no reason to say it. But he said it and afterwards I started thinking about it and I thought, 'Well yeah, you know, maybe I will.' I think he feels a little bit more threatened now that I am making a good enough wage that he knows that I could leave.
> Because he's known for a couple of years now that I've got enough money in investments that if I ever wanted to leave, I could. And I don't tell him this, but he knows.

This fear seems to be the basis for a change in Joe's behavior - a change which Joan perceives as needing as much verbal reinforcement as a child needs.

> But now I know, 'Yeah, I could do it,' and he knows it too. So he'll clean the house once in awhile and he'll make supper. Granted, I always have to thank him for it and I don't hear too much thanks when I wash his shorts and stuff. If I walk in the door and the house is clean he'll say, 'Well, did you notice I cleaned the house?' 'Oh yeah! Thank-you!' You know. Like I feel I have to praise everything he does. It's like living with a 10 year old in a way. The more I praise, the more he'll do, but that's his problem, not mine. As long as he'll do the housework, I'll praise him. He used to be a real chauvinist pig, really bad, and he still has the traits but it's not as bad as it was even five years ago. He's getting a little bit more - the more I work and the more I do, the better he gets.

However, while Joan making money is a threat to Joe, it has other meanings for her. As mentioned above, it gives her a sense of independence. Also, knowing she could leave her husband if she so chose and support herself, is positive for Joan.

> And I know that I could leave because I could live on my own quite nicely with the kids. And I think that bothers him. Doesn't bother me; it makes me feel good. Because back to the times when I was 23 and 24 with two little kids, there was no way; I couldn't even think about leaving. And now I can. It's a bit more freedom that I do sort of have a choice. A better one than I had 10 years ago, anyway.
> I feel that, 'Yeah, I can do it!' Like I can be on my own, I can support myself! I

> could support the kids if something happened to Joe or if we divorced or something. I'm capable! Whereas before you're never really sure.

Further, Joan feels worthwhile, knowing she can contribute financially to her family's future. She describes two incidents which demonstrate this.

> I did impress the socks off him awhile ago. We were talking about how we wanted – we have a fairly large mortgage on the house – and we want to pay for the house and then we'd be home free. He quit his job three years ago and bought a company and he sold that and then he's been doing this other stuff. So the insecurity when he quit his job really bothered me for quite awhile. We'd never starve to death but I always think it's coming around the corner. So I've been socking away money. So awhile ago we were talking about selling the house and that, and he said, 'Well, let me see. How much money can we scrape up?' And I said, 'Well I've got about $10,000 that I can contribute.' He just about fell off his chair. And it made me feel good that he knows that I've got this money. It made me feel good that I could contribute it and that he also knows that I've got it. He says, 'Where the hell did you get that from?' And I says, 'From working!' So it made me feel good. It was one of my highlights of the year.

Finally, Joan associates making her own money to a feeling of security – a feeling she did not have as a child growing up in a poor family. She explains:

> It's a feeling of security. And security has always meant a lot to me, because when I was growing up we never had hardly any money, and it's a feeling of security to me. And I'm really bad with money – like I hoard it. I can save money, almost to the point of too much. Like I won't go out and spend, I'll save it. And that's kind of a hangup in a way too. But I have I guess, since I started selling real estate.

That Joan feels very strongly about money meaning security is validated by her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> Because to me money is security and that's the big thing, is the security. To not have to worry about them taking away all your possessions and living in a shack or something. That's the security angle of it, and to me money means security. When I was a kid money was a problem. We didn't have any. I always had hand-me-down clothes and we could never do things because it was too expensive. I lived with my grandparents until I was eight, and then Mom remarried and I moved in with them. And my step-father didn't have a lot of money. He worked – well, he had a steady job and everything, but he didn't make a lot of money. He was a truck driver in Vancouver so he wasn't making huge amounts of money or anything. And then they had the little kids, my brother and sister, so I mean money was always really tight. I started working when I was about 13 – babysitting, well babysitting before that – but when I was 13, I started working in cafes and part time after school so that I could have a few dollars of my own. That's always really meant a lot to me. But the security thing – I've always got to have money in the bank. If I didn't have money in the bank, I think I'd go nuts. It's a real panic situation with me. And it's a security that it's there. Even when I don't spend it, it's still there.

There are other aspects of Joan's past which are important in understanding what it has meant to her to be a woman. When she speaks about liking her independence she sees herself as different from her mother.

> My mother was really different. Well, maybe she's not different; maybe I'm different. She's very dependent on my, well, it's my step-father. She's very dependent on him. She doesn't like working. She worked when I was younger but she doesn't like working. She likes to sit home and watch TV and have my dad go out and make the money and give her X number of dollars a month, type of thing. That's just right up her alley! And I always wanted to do something different than that. I didn't want to stay home. I wanted to go to university; I wanted to *be* something. Like I've always thought that, 'Someday I'm going to be something.' And she never. Around home, I don't know, she always claimed that I should have been a boy for the things that I like to do - like the working. When I started doing the ceramic tile or when I started selling real estate, to her that's a man's job. And maybe that's why I've always liked it, just to sort of bug my mother.

Being told by her mother that she should have been a boy started early for Joan. She explains that as a child she was intrigued with what society at that time had decided was *supposed to be* masculine.

> When I was little I always wanted a gun and I always wanted a truck and I wanted boys' toys. I was a real tomboy. I was told that it was not ladylike to do this. And I always got dolls and doll houses and baby carriages and stuff. And I was always given all the little girl things and I didn't want the little girl things. I had more fun running around playing Cowboys and Indians with the boys when I was little, than playing dolls. I always thought that was kind of silly - cutting out doll cutouts and all that kind of stuff. I always wanted to do what the boys were doing - building forts and stuff. I was part of the neighborhood gang sort of thing. I was right in there. It was always like the gang of boys in the neighborhood and me. And they sort of treated me like their little sister, and we just sort of did a lot of things together, right up until I was in high school. The neighborhood I lived in there was about five or six boys and they were my age to a couple of years older, and we just sort of chummed around together. They would tell me all their problems with their girl friends and it used to kind of choke me up once in awhile, that they never sort of treated me as a girl. But I was still one of the group and that made me feel good, that they would include me.

The attraction Joan felt for so-called masculine activities was not learned from her step-father whom she began to live with at age eight, and whom she didn't much like at the time.

> My step-father's not really a supportive type person. He never shows any kind of emotion. He's a good guy now - I didn't like him when I first moved in with him, but I think he's a good guy now. And he put up with a fair amount with me - that I don't know if I would with a kid - but he did.

This interest in being around men and being involved in activities socially defined as masculine, persisted after Joan left high school.

> I quit school in grade 10 and I moved. I went to business college and I moved up north so our little gang sort of broke up. But then when I moved up north I was always with a lot of men. My very first job was with eight or nine men, and me and one other girl in the office - an older lady. I've always been with men. Maybe that's why I've never really thought of myself as being a woman, because I've always associated with men, I've always got along well with men and I've been interested in what they're doing. I like the things that men do. When I was up north I joined the Stock Car Club - that's pretty well a man's thing. But I just decided that I was going to get out and meet some people so I joined the Stock Car Club because I really like it. I ended up

meeting my husband.

Joan's interest in being with men persisted until she discovered she could have women friends who were actively involved in the world outside the home. She explains her distaste for the 'women's world' she experienced in the 1960's and 1970's.

> I've always felt more comfortable with men than I have with women. It always seemed to me that men made more sense when they talk. I don't like sitting around back-stabbing somebody or talking about making home-made bread or *The Edge of Night*, and that kind of thing. I'm not that interested. It's only been in the last three or four years that I've had women friends that I have a good time with. And it's all women that are in business themselves and we don't sit around and compare children and things like that. We talk about business and things that are going on, rather than 'Suzy did this last night' or teething and that kind of thing. Before, you would go to a party, well you still do now - you go to a party and the women all sit in one room and the men all sit in the other, and the men are always talking about a hell of a lot more exciting stuff than the women were. Toilet training never did turn my crank. Like I never really cared. I figured that I'd never seen a six year old got to school wearing a diaper yet, and I figured my kids would eventually get toilet trained. It was never on a priority list. So I always thought men were a lot more interesting to talk to and be around. They were always *doing* things. Whereas women were just sort of *waiting*.

Understanding Joan's perception of what women are 'supposed to' be and do, and her desire to be involved in activities she perceived to be more exciting, it makes sense that Joan perceives herself as a person, not as a woman. Actually becoming a woman physically at puberty was also difficult. Although she felt proud to be growing up she felt self-conscious about her breasts, embarassed by her young classmates unwanted attention, and severe pain and vomiting with menstruation.

> When I started to menstruate I was really embarrassed by it. Probably because my mother told my step-father and I had only lived with him for about four years. I started quite young - I was 12 - and she told my step-father. Well, I could have just crawled in a hole and died, that she had told my step-father. But I had only lived with him for about four years and I was still very embarrassed about being around him. I started to wear a bra when I was about 11 because I had to - I was quite big-busted. I was really kind of embarrassed by the whole situation. And then I had extremely severe cramps - I still have - and it was not, 'Oh! I'm a woman!' It was 'Oh God! These cramps!' And throwing up and being sick for a day every month. I didn't like it. And I think a lot of it had to do with the way my mother treated it, like telling my dad, and I was really embarrassed. I think I was in grade six when it happened and there was only one other girl in the room - Cathy and I were the only ones that wore bras and the only ones that had our periods. And we were a little - we were a *lot* self-conscious about it. Especially about wearing a bra. We never really talked about menstruation, but wearing the bras used to really embarrass us. The guys would snap your bra and of course, being in grade six and the only two that were wearing them didn't help. I felt kind of proud in a way, and yet in another way you're embarrassed by the whole thing.

Being afraid of getting pregnant and of giving birth, and not being able to discuss her emerging sexuality with her mother was also part of Joan's experience as a young

woman.

> And then I was always so deathly afraid I would get pregnant that I was really a 'No, no, no, hands off, don't touch!' I'm sure I wore iron panties. Well, I did wear iron panties until my husband. I was always terrified of becoming pregnant. I was terrified of the whole birth process and I guess the shame of it all, because in those days it was a shame. There was one girl in our school that had had a baby and given it up for adoption and it was really bad. And just a lot of it was just that actually having the baby scared me a lot. And girls who got pregnant were extremely loose, rotten, immoral, wild women. My mother was – well, she still is – like you don't talk about sex with her. You don't talk about your feelings with her or anything to do with sex. Sex was like a dirty word around our house, and you just didn't talk about it. I don't ever remember her talking to me about having babies or intercourse or anything like that. But she did tell me about having a period. I don't remember exactly what she said, but I remember afterwards thinking about it and I couldn't figure out where the blood came from. Like was it out of my mouth, my ear, what? I didn't know. She really didn't explain it, not really. My girlfriend and I used to get ahold of some books all the time and leaf through them and we learned more through books than we did through anything else. Because my mother certainly wouldn't say anything.

Joan did overcome her self–consciousness about her sexuality and enjoys her sexual self now.

> But I'm a lot different than my mother. Like I can talk to my daughter about it. She's 14 now and I can talk to her about menstruation without dying of embarrassment, things like that. I'm not 100 percent comfortable talking to her about it, but I can say a lot more than my mother ever could to me. I feel pretty good about my own sexuality. I feel good when somebody makes a pass at me. I feel good. I feel it's a little bit of an ego thing and I feel good about it. I enjoy being a woman in that aspect. I enjoy sex and I like the idea of men pursuing me, which happens.

However, what it took for Joan to overcome her fears of being a sexually active woman was a relationship that felt special and secure, and a lover who was eight years her senior and who pressured her.

> I don't know if it was much of a courtship. He was always late. I was about eighteen I guess, when I first met him, and it was through the Stock Car Club. And I don't know, we started going out and it was funny, I'd gone out with a lot of guys before this and when I met him I just knew that this was it. Like they always tell you you'll know, and I used to think, 'How the hell are you going to know?' But I knew. Like after about the third date, I knew that it was more that just going out – that we would eventually get married and be together. I just knew it. I don't know why. I didn't hear bells ring or anything but we got along really well from the beginning. As a result it took a lot of the guessing out of it. Because with other guys you'd go out with, it was sort of, 'Are they going to call again?' Because in those days you did not phone a guy. He did all the pursuing. And I don't know, when I met Joe it was sort of, yeah I knew. He was always late for dates and things like that, but I knew that he would come and I could depend on him sort of. It kind of took a lot of the guesswork out of it, I guess – that you weren't concerned with whether he was going to call you or not. And I don't know, there was some security in it – a lot of security in it. Whereas before, with other guys that you'd go out with, there was never really the security. It was always, 'Oh, is he going to call again? Did I do something to make him mad?' Well, that never bothered me that much, because I used to try and break up with them first. A little bit of an ego trip there. You always broke up with the guy first

and you always had somebody else on the string before you broke up. Like when we were in high school you never broke up with a guy and then sat at home for a couple of weeks. You always had someone else you wanted to go out with. Of course when I started dating you went steady with them. If you'd gone out on two dates you were going steady at least. Sometimes it would last a week, sometimes a month, but it was always classed as going steady. Now the relationships, God, when you're going steady you go with the guy for three years. Not us boy! I think the longest I ever went out with a guy was about nine months. And I got so bored towards the end there. But when I met Joe it was kind of a security thing.

When I got involved with my husband – like he's eight years older than I am – and for the first – see, we got married in June and I had met him in June the year before. So for the first eight or nine months we had gone out together and had never done anything, other than a bit of petting and stuff like that. And then he sort of put the pressure on me I guess, like, 'We either go to bed or we break up.' Well, I don't know why I did. To this day I do not know why I did that. We went to bed and I still don't know exactly why. Maybe I was just sick and tired of all the pressure, I don't know.

Joan's initial sexual experience was not pleasurable for her, as she explains.

It wasn't good for me, the first time; it wasn't at all. I thought, 'Is this what I've been holding out for all these years? This is it?' I couldn't understand what everybody was talking about, for God's sakes. It certainly didn't do anything for me. All it did was hurt. I don't know. I didn't enjoy it the first couple of times. After that it was alright, but the first couple of times I certainly didn't. And like I say, I don't know why I did.

Sexual activity resulted in pregnancy and was followed closely by marriage. Joan did not feel forced to marry, however; she felt she had a choice. She explains:

But it was really kind of funny. We had decided that we were going to go to Dawson Creek because we were living in Fort St.John at the time, and we were going to Dawson Creek for the weekend. And the weekend that we were going to go I got my period, so of course we couldn't go. Well, the next weekend we went and we got a motel room in Dawson Creek and I never did get another period. I was pregnant that first month! Just ripped me right off! I thought of all the people that fooled around for years and never got caught. The very first month! Wham! Pregnant! I was madder than a wet hen, just at the injustice of it all. 'Why me?' And then I thought, too, 'Boy, maybe it's a good thing that I didn't fool around with other guys because I could have got stuck with some real winners.' But if it had been with someone I didn't love or didn't feel the way I did about Joe, I wouldn't have got married. I had a lot of support that way. It wasn't an 'I *have* to' thing. The people I boarded with – I had known them since I was 13– they sat me down and they said, 'Look, if you don't want to get married, don't feel that you have to. You can stay with us and have the baby and do whatever you want to. If you want to keep the baby, fine. If you want to give it up for adoption, or whatever.' So I had a lot of support that way. So that made me feel good, too, that I did have a choice. It wasn't a thing of being forced into it. And with him not knowing, too, that made me feel better.

It was also important to Joan that Joe didn't feel forced to marry her.

When we got married a year later I was pregnant, but actually that wasn't the reason we got married. He didn't know I was pregnant until after I got the engagement ring. I was bound and determined he was not going to marry me because I was pregnant. And that meant a lot to me, that we got engaged. And I think I told him the next day or something, but I did actually get the ring and the whole bit before I told him.

Reflecting on what it meant to her to be newly married, Joan talks about the excitement she felt.

> And I don't know, at the time it was great. I was maybe ready for it. I'd never really thought of it as permanent or anything. Now, if I was to marry, I'd probably be scared to death. But at that time I was 20 years old and everybody was doing it, and you didn't think that it was going to be for 50 years. It was sort of like playing house to a certain degree. You got to have your own apartment and you got to have all your own things, and live with this guy. In those days you didn't live with a person; you had to get married. It was a fun thing. I didn't think, 'My god! I'm going to be stuck with him for 50 years.' It seemed like I would never be 25, and I was 20. Like if I had to do it again, now it would probably scare the hell out of me and I don't know whether I would do it or not. But back then you didn't know any better. And people would tell you, 'Oh, it's not that great,' but it always was yours was going to be great. It was the other guy that was having problems, but your relationship would always be wine and roses, and hot flashes when he walked through the door. I guess back in those days you were just horny. I don't know. It seemed like a good idea. But you don't think of it as a permanent relationship. At least I didn't. It was just something that I was getting married, I was having this baby – it was a whole exciting thing. Later it kind of hits you, 'Wow! This is it!'

For Joan, another aspect to being a woman has been being a mother. She describes the many feelings she has had in this role.

> Another thing about being a woman is, I guess, being a mother. I don't know, I never did get the maternal instinct, I don't think. Like I feel very protective toward my kids, especially my son now – I feel extremely protective towards him since he had his accident.
> But I enjoy the kids. I get really frustrated with them sometimes, and sometimes wish they weren't around, but I think everybody does. I'd like my daughter to have more advantages than I had. Like I'd like her to be able to go to university. She says she wants to be a nurse, and I'll say, 'Well, why don't you be a doctor?' 'But Mom, I don't want to be a doctor, I want to be a nurse.' I have to keep pushing liberation on her– that you can do whatever you want to; you're not stuck in the traditional roles. She can do whatever she wants, and the little fart wants to be a nurse, or she wants to be a kindergarten teacher – what I consider traditional roles„ she wants to do, and it kind of frustrates me sometimes. I'd like to see her be an engineer or a lawyer maybe – things I would have liked to have done, and couldn't.

As Joan continues to speak about what it means to her to be a mother, an important issue arises – a concern about whether or not she is the kind of mother she is *supposed to be*.

> Back to what it means to me to be a mother, though. Like it never really hit me that I was a mother. Like every once in awhile I look around and see these two kids and say, 'Gee, they're mine.' But I just sort of eased into it. I've always been around babies and stuff. My brother is 10 years younger than me and my sister is about 12 years younger than me, so I sort of feel like I had a part in raising them. And it scares me sometimes to think that you've got these two little people dependent on you, and like how you treat them is going to affect them for the rest of your life. And I don't know whether I'm doing the right thing or not. I don't know whether I'm setting an example or, like I don't know how I'm doing it, if I'm doing it. I'm just sort of being me and hope to hell that that's the best thing. My daughter is turning out really good. She's 14 and she's not really involved with boys; we've had

> no trouble with drugs or alcohol or anything. She's just a really nice kid. So I think, 'Well geez, maybe I've done something wrong or right, but I sure as heck don't know what it is.' We've just always been us. But I feel like maybe there's something I'm supposed to be doing that I'm not doing. Reading all these books gives me the feeling that I'm supposed to be telling my children something so that 20 years from now they'll say, 'Oh, my mother always used to say this.' I mean, my kids are going to remember me saying, 'Oh shit! I screwed up a deal!' Like I don't think I'm giving them any philosophy in life or something. Sometimes I kind of wonder, 'How are my kids going to remember me?' They certainly aren't going to remember me for the home-baked cookies and the clean floors. Are they going to remember me flying out the door after I get a phone call to go and show a house? Like maybe there's something I should be doing but I just don't know what. And I'm not too consistent. As far as their discipline and that is concerned, I'm probably the most inconsistent or unconsistent person. One day I'll scream at them for doing something and the next day they can do it. So I'm probably doing something wrong there, but they seem to be working out alright. Angie knows what she can and can't do, but I don't know if it's something I taught her or whether she's learned on her own. I don't know. Like am I doing the right thing? But how do you ever know? You don't really know until maybe 50 years from now. If they're successful and happy and everything I can say, 'Oh yeah gee, I probably had something to do with that.' If they're rotten and living down in skid road you can say, 'Well I never heard of them before in my life.'

Joan resolves this concern with humor and by reflecting on what she perceives to be her own and other families' lack of influence on their children.

> Because I firmly believe that it doesn't matter what kind of environment you're from, you're going to be what you're going to be. I don't know whether that's believing in fate or what, but I came from a broken family, I didn't like my step-father, my mother was always screaming at me, and I feel that I've done alright. And I've know girls that come from a super close family, that are hookers in Vancouver. So I think it's what's in you, rather than what people tell you and how you're brought up. I think it's really what's in you. I think that if you're determined that you're going to do something, then you'll do it. Does that make any sense? It makes sense to me.

At the same time Joan recognizes the increasing pressures on youth today - pressures she is glad she didn't have to cope with.

> Like I'm glad that I was born when I was. I don't think I could handle the hippie generation and all the drugs and alcohol and stuff. I'm sure I'd be selling flowers down at the airport, too. I think I would, and yet I know I probably wouldn't. I'm too sensible for that. I can see it screwing up a person's life and it probably wouldn't, but you never know. I'm just glad I didn't have to face it. Because when I was a kid, the worst you could do was go out and drink a bottle of beer and get drunk on a bottle of beer. I mean we didn't have drugs and that kind of stuff to worry about. So that was kind of good. I kind of skipped over that.

Initially Joan only briefly mentioned her son's accident in relation to her experience as a mother. Later, however, in answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?", she explains how her son's accident has changed her values, and gives examples to demonstrate how this difference in values is manifested in her daily life.

I would like to say that over and above everything I value my children, and I do, but like I just explained, I do have this severe hangup about money and I do extremely value money. But since David had his accident my ideals have changed in that aspect. Because when he was hit by that car it didn't matter whether we had a million dollars or nothing. He still would have gotten the same treatment; he still would have had the same results. So my material things have changed. Like I'm not really into material things. Like if you came to our house, I don't have big, expensive furniture and stuff like that, and I don't really want to. I guess money – yeah, it does have a bearing on my life, but mainly to be happy. I know that sounds very like a Miss America speech and stuff, but to be happy and healthy I think are the biggest, and then money. Well maybe not so much money as security.

So David's accident has made a difference in my values. Before the accident I was more concerned with having a better house and a better car and all that kind of stuff. I'm not quite as concerned about that anymore. I'm more concerned about him. I think your values just change a bit. You're more aware that anything can happen – that you're not in control. And of course I keep going over the accident and saying, 'Well, if I hadn't let him go down to the store at that particular time . . . . ' I was more concerned with material things and after that – but I'm getting back into it. Like I think a person – no, they shouldn't have to go through a disaster every five years. But for the first two or three years after that I really didn't give a damn about material things. I'm getting more into it now. Like not as much as I was before, but more so. I guess the memory's sort of leaving a little bit and I'm getting back to my old ways, but not as extreme. I find that I don't panic as much as I used to. Like if something minor goes wrong I don't get into a snit, whereas before I would probably have gotten into a snit. Now I feel, 'Oh well, everybody's fine. What are we worrying about?' And I'll think to myself too, 'Well, what is the worst thing that can happen?' in a situation. Like one night – it was just not too long after David was hurt; he was still in the hospital in fact – and I had gone out and my husband had come home. And I had gone out and left my daughter alone and I came home because he was supposed to be home in half an hour. Well he'd been down at the bar, so he came home and he'd been drinking and he left a frying pan full of grease on the stove. Then he went next door to visit the neighbors. Well we had a kitchen fire. I had been out and everything and I came home and I came up the back alley and I walked in the house and here was black smoke all over everywhere. But I saw that Joe was there and my daughter was there and I knew David was in the hospital. So it didn't concern me, because well, it can be fixed. It was no big deal. And they were all just waiting in anticipation for me to come home and explode, but it didn't mean a thing to me. And I find that I have no patience with people that get into a real snit about what I think is some small, minor detail, like denting a car. So what? It can be fixed; money can replace it; it's no big deal. And other people will just go right off the deep end. Well I don't. Maybe because, like I say, it can be fixed; it can be repaired. So what's the big deal? But a person like David can't be fixed and repaired and replaced. That's the way he is. He's getting better all the time but he still needs a bit of fixing and repairing. But with just material things, well so what? If it breaks, buy another one.

Joan also describes a change in her attitude toward her son and in her behavior, when he came home from his long hospital stay.

But I worry about David now, whereas I never did before. Like I was not a worrier that much. I was not overly protective, where I think I am now. I'm too afraid of what can happen. I'm getting a little better now because I really have to. Like I can't keep him in a cocoon in the house anymore. But when he first wanted to go down the street, I followed him. I let him go down the street but I followed him and hid behind fences to make sure he was alright. I was so sure that it was going to happen again. Because it's a very traumatic thing! And I was so afraid that if I let him out of my sight it's going to happen, but as long as I'm with him everything will be alright. And now still,

> when he asks me to do something my first instinct is to say, 'No, you can't do it.' But I'm trying really hard to let him do a few things on his own. It just kills me. I sit at home and just worry until he gets home. Or if he's 10 minutes later than I think he should be coming home, I'm just scanning the streets and waiting for the phone to ring. But I am getting better. But it's funny, I never worry about Angie. Probably because nothing has ever happened to her. But I never worry about her; I figure she's fine. Whereas I'm sure something else is going to happen to David.

Still speaking in the context of valuing her children, Joan describes her adjustment to her son's handicapped condition, describes the worries she has about his future, the burden she experiences, and the protective feelings that she has for him.

> But what do my kids mean? That's a hard question. Well, just for them to be healthy and happy. Like my daughter – she's no problem, she's happy, she's healthy, she's full of shit and vinegar, she's going all the time. My son really bothers me because he's not happy a lot of the time. He's handicapped, and I had a hard time dealing with the fact that 'Yes, he is handicapped.' I can say it but I don't like other people to say it to me. I'm getting a little better as time goes on but I still don't like other people to point out to me that he is handicapped or to ask me what's wrong with him. Because I feel that there's not that much wrong with him, but when someone else notices it and says to me, 'What's wrong with him?', I think, 'Oh God! There *is* something wrong with him.' And then I sort of have to deal with it all over. He's the one that really bothers me the most. Like how is he going to adjust later on in life? Like my daughter, as I say, there's no problem with her. She'll probably end up being married and having 15 children and be happy the rest of her life; she's just that type of kid. But how is my son going to do that? Is he ever going to be able to get married? Will he be able to live on his own? Things like that. Well, I guess every parent of a handicapped child probably goes through – but a lot of them, well, most of them have it from birth. I didn't. I had it from age six, and that's hard. I could see his potential before the accident and I know his potential – well, I can sort of see when I get realistic about it – his potential now. And I think, 'Why did it happen to me?' Not to *him*. Like 'Why do *I* have to put up with this? Why do *I* have to bear this burden?' Whereas actually it's him. But when people notice, I feel it. Anything that happens to your kids I think happens directly to you. Like right now he doesn't even know that people are kind of looking at him because he walks a little funny and he's not extremely bright. But I do. I'm very conscious of people making fun of him – I don't think they do; that's one of the joys of living in a small town. Everybody knows all about him. All the kids know about him and he's treated really well at school. Nobody makes fun of him or anything. But when he gets out into the working world are people going to say, 'Well, he's slow,' or 'He walks funny'? How is he going to be 10 years from now? I don't know. But I think you always want to protect your children. Maybe that is the maternal instinct. You don't want people making fun of them; you don't want people pointing at them, and things like that. It really bothers me. Well, it bothers me a lot more than I generally let myself admit. But we were at the Glenrose yesterday and I saw a lot of – like there's a lot of really bad kids, not bad kids but bad cases up there, and you thank your lucky stars that he is as well as he is. But you wish other people could go and see those kids too, because they have no idea. I didn't have any idea until I started taking him to the Glenrose, what kids are like that are badly deformed and can't speak. You just thank your stars that the kids are as well as they are. Because it almost seems like a miracle that you have a normal child. But you're not aware until you go there.

That her son being seriously hurt in an acident was a traumatic experience for Joan, is evidenced in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced being

powerless?"

> Well when David was hurt I felt completely powerless. Like there was not a damn thing I could have done. If I could have, to be very dramatic about it, if I could have cut open a vein and bled, I would have. And there was nothing I could do. And that was really an extremely helpless situation for me. To go into his room every day and see him lying there, and there was nothing I could do. Like we couldn't even get a better doctor; we had the best. I don't think I've ever felt, and I don't ever want to feel that powerless again. Because I just had no control over the situation at all. And there was just nothing I could do. Up until then I can't think of anything that made me feel like I wasn't in control, or had some say in a situation. But when that happened – you were just depending on the doctors and on God. I'm not an overly religious person but I remember once coming back from the hospital and stopping alongside the freeway and beating the shit out of the steering wheel and just screaming, 'God, do something! Either take him or make him better, but do something!' And I would like to say that this great revelation came over and the next day he was talking, but it didn't happen that way. But I felt better. I felt it was in *His* hands kind of thing, and I felt a lot better. But that was the worst feeling of being powerless. There just wasn't anything I could do.

As stated above, the experience of her son being seriously hurt made a difference in Joan's values, feelings and behavior. It also made a difference in her relationship with her husband. She explains how they relied on each other for support and grew closer, comparing her situation with that of other women.

> I met a lot of women in the hospital, when he was really badly hurt, and a lot of them had children dying of different horrible things, and their husbands had left them because they couldn't handle what their kids had. And I thought, 'What a rotten bunch of bastards! Here the woman had not only got to go through having her son or daughter dying, but she's got to do it alone.' And I thought, 'That is really rotten! Like it just isn't fair!' But the men just can't seem to handle it. And that really bothered me a lot. I'd talk to these women. And at least there was one thing – I did have a lot of support. Joe was really good when David was so bad. We had each other to kind of lean on. It seems like you either go farther apart or closer together, and we sort of went closer together. We could lean on each other. Because a lot of those women didn't have any support, and I thought that was really rotten. Really unfair! And I think they thought it was really unfair too, but when the guy runs out on you there isn't a hell of a lot you can do.

Joan's ability to laugh also helped her to handle the feelings of helplessness and worry, as she explains in answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?"

> But I can laugh about things that a lot of people can't laugh about. I value that, because a lot of people get so uptight about everything. I think you should laugh at things because everything is so serious. A lot of stuff is so serious that you can't go around moping and groping – you can't go around moping all the time. You have to kind of laugh at things. And sometimes that's about all you can do, is laugh at things. It always amazed me when I was in the hospital that there was three or four of us that our kids were really bad off – some of them had leukemia and all this kind of stuff – and we could sit in the family room and just tell jokes and laugh and giggle. And I always thought that was good. That was a way of releasing pressure. And people would walk in and just think we were all bananas, but it was a way of – if you didn't laugh you were going to cry. It was our way of kind of handling it. Laughing and stuff like that.

Interestingly, Joan began the interview saying, 'I've never really thought about being a woman.' Although she may not have reflected previously on what being a woman has meant to her, and may not be entirely conscious of how being a woman has affected her life experiences, when questioned and given the necessary time to think and reflect she found she had a lot to say. Summing up her answer, she emphasizes that the meaning to her of being a woman has changed over her adult life.

> Probably about 10 years ago I would have had some different answers about being a woman, but right now I'm reasonably satisfied with my life and I like what I'm doing. I don't feel different – like I feel that I'm a person rather than a woman or a man. I feel like I'm a person. The people that I work with and that don't treat me any differently. 10 years ago I was at home trying to get out. Whereas now I'm out, and it's a good feeling.

In spite of her own feelings of increased satisfaction, however, Joan remains aware of inequalities that remain for women both in the home and in the world outside of the home. Asked, "What do you think about this saying: 'It's a man's world'?", she replied:

> I definitely agree. I think liberation has helped immensely but I still think it's a man's world. I've noticed a big difference with my sister and brother – the way they live is different; they're more equal partners. Whereas I've noticed that women that are my age, we all seem to have the same problems with our husbands. Like the two women downstairs and I, the three of us go out for two and a juice occasionally and moan and groan about our husbands, and we're all pretty well moaning and groaning about the same things. We feel that we have to ask their permission, that if we are sitting down in the bar having a couple of drinks they're not going to like it, that if they decided to move away we would have to, that they're more in control of our lives than we even like to admit that they are. Whereas I think my sister and brother – they're in their early twenties – my brother will walk in the door and start making supper. He never thinks a thing of it. His wife is working and she gets home two hours later than he does so he walks in and he makes supper. It's no big deal. Whereas I don't have that. So I think it's coming more that it's going to be a person's world, not a man's world. They're the ones that make a lot of the big business decisions. Well they are! How many women do you have in higher positions? We have Margaret Thatcher and that's it. They're the ones that sort of make the political and business decisions and we don't. We're getting there – there's more women in parliament and in business that have jobs of significance – but we've got a hell of a long way to go before we have what I would like to think of as an equal say in it. I think that a lot of the women that are in politics, high up in politics and high up in business – I think a lot of them are token. It's like Negroes were token Negroes 10 years ago in the States. You had to hire so many colored people. I think now a lot of then have to hire so many women. And you have to give them so much responsibility. Now whether they've got the same kind of responsibility and the same decision–making as the men, I don't know. Because I don't know that many women that are in that influential a bunch. I think we're getting handed a crock of shit. I don't think we're making the decisions that we like to think we are. They're just sort of patting us on the back and saying, 'You be nice girls and we'll let you be a manager of a bank in some little hick town that doesn't really mean a hill of beans anyway. But I think if a woman tried to take over General Motors they might get excited about it. She'd probably do a hell of a lot better job, but that doesn't make any difference. So yeah, I do think it's a man's world. And I think by the time maybe my daughter comes around, it might be a little better. But I

> can't see it being much better. Men have had it good for too long. I read that magazine, *New Woman*, and there was a joke in there. I can't remember how it went but it was along the lines of a corporate woman saying, 'Gee, you know, men have had all this much fun for so many years. No wonder they told us business was hard, and didn't want us to get into it. They're having a ball! And they don't want us to know about them having such a good time.' All the rights and the things they get to do that we never get to do. Executive jets and flying around here and there and the whole thing. So as long as they can keep it from us they're gonna. It's just like if we were in power, would we want a bunch of men coming in and taking over? Hell, no! We're going to fight as long as we can.

In answer to the question, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?", Joan explains what women's liberation means to her and how men can benefit from it too.

> Well I don't agree with it 100 percent and I've had tons of arguments about this, boy. Some, you just mention Women's Lib and I'm right after it. I believe that when women are liberated, men will be liberated too. Like I feel sorry for some of the men nowadays. They have to go out and provide, and generally once they're in a job they have to stay there because they can't afford to quit. I have an advantage over my husband in that I can quit anytime I want. If I get really pissed off someday I can go stomping in the house and say, 'That's it! I've had it! I've quit work; it's up to you.! Now if he does that to me – we've had this example actually, it happened to us. Since he quit with AGT he's been home quite a bit and then he bought a business and then he sold that and then he bought a CAT and he's been home quite a bit. The neighbors kind of envy him but they laugh at him too. Like, 'Oh, what's Joe doing nowadays?' Well not a hell of a lot of anything. He's got the CAT but he's not working right now. Okay, they kind of laugh at him that he's not out there going out at eight o'clock in the morning and coming in at five. He's kind of doing his own thing. They envy him too that he has that freedom but it's a little bit more laughing at him right now. Whereas I think with Women's Lib, if women were free to pursue careers that they wanted to and make the money that they could, men would be freer to be able to stay home if they wanted to. Because there's a lot of men that would be happier than hell staying home, raising the family and the wives go out to work. But it's an unaccepted thing right now. Especially with the age group that I chum around with. I mean that would just be totally unacceptable! There would be obviously something wrong with the guy.

Joan also explains that she wants to be recognized as feminine or as sexual by men, in a caring way that makes her feel special. She thinks that men appreciate this kind of attention also.

> And I like to be treated like a woman – I like to have doors opened for me, I like to have my cigarettes lit, I like to have men paying attention to me. It means that I'm feminine. I don't want to be butch – I don't want to be out there wearing a tie and suit – but I like to be feminine. I like to have men desire me. I desire some of them. And I like to have men think that I'm attractive and that I'm sexually attractive. And I think by them opening doors and lighting cigarettes and paying attention to me, I think that's kind of that they're looking at me – not as a sex object – Christ! I'd never make a sex object – but that they're sexually attracted to me maybe, in a very round–about way. But it's a good feeling. It's a feeling of being feminine, of being protected in a way. They want to open the door for you, they want to light your cigarette – they're looking after you. I would probably totally rebel if I had that constantly or if some guy said to me, 'Look, I'm going to take you away from all this and I'm going to put you in a little cocoon and I'm going to

> look after all your needs.' I would totally rebel. But I like a little bit of it. But I also think that a woman can do that to a man too. Like everybody wants to feel special and I think that by him doing that to me I feel a little special. But I can do it to him too, by phoning him and saying, 'How are you doing?' Or taking him out for supper once in awhile, that type of thing. That he is special. But I like to feel that I'm special to him too. And I think that women who get into Women's Lib, hot and heavy, that they want to be totally independent, they don't even want to have men around. I think that's wrong. It's wrong for me anyway. I like men. I enjoy their company and I enjoy feeling feminine when I'm with them. Even in business I enjoy it. I want them to know that I'm good at my job but I also want then to know that I'm a woman and that I'm a little bit feminine. I wouldn't be thought of as butch or out to castrate somebody or anything like that. I want them to know that I'm a woman but I want them to know that I'm doing business too.

Being afraid to be seen as butch or as castrating, Joan exposes her vulnerability to criticism. The following comments demonstrate her adoption of the conflicting images of women who are successful.

> And I think that Liberation has helped, but like I said before, I think there's a lot of token women in business that have probably slept their way up. The ones that are in high positions, I don't think they've slept their way up – I think they're pretty damned smart. Like Flora Macdonald for instance. I think she's got to be an extremely brilliant woman to be where she is. Because isn't it the old saying, 'To be a woman and doing a man's job, you have to do it twice as good as the man, or something, to get half the recognition.' Well I think Flora Macdonald is probably a good case, because I think she's probably twice as smart as men to be in the position she's in. And you can have dumb women and dumb men.

Finally, Joan describes how the Women's Movement supports her ideas of equal pay and equal opportunity, again explaining how she perceives these ideas as beneficial to men as well. Although she dislikes some of the tactics used by some women, she understands their usefulness in drawing attention to the problems.

> I think Liberation has made women more aware of what we didn't have before – that we didn't have equal pay and that we didn't have equal rights. And I think it's made us think more along those lines, that dammit, we should be getting it. Personally, I've always had a tendancy to think that way – that if I'm going to go out and drive a truck for eight hours and so's the guy next to me, that we damn well better get the same pay. If he's going to get $4.50, and I only get $4.00 an hour, I'm going to scream about it. So I've always thought that way about equal pay for equal jobs. I think we should have equal opportunity too. Like I'm glad to see women getting into West Point. Not that I would ever want to do it, but if you want to do it, fine, do it. Like I think men should be able to do whatever they want to do too. And I think once Women's Liberation – it should actually be People's Liberation, it shouldn't be Women's Liberation. If my husband wants to stay home and look after the kids all day, fine. If I want to go out and support the family, fine. It should be whoever has the best ability to do that job, not whether you're a man or a woman. I think Liberation has brought that around. I think more people are thinking along those lines now. But I don't know if it's doing all that much good. I wouldn't burn my bra. And I think that at the beginning women got too carried away with it. But maybe we had to, to get it into the forefront – like burning the bras, and Gloria Steinem and all this kind of stuff. I think that they sort of got into it too hot and heavy but they probably had to, to bring it into the forefront. I think we'll be a lot happier when women are happier. But I've had a lot of arguments about Women's Lib.

B. Beret

Beret is a 69 year old woman born in Alberta of Norwegian and Swedish heritage, who lives with her husband on her family farm in central Alberta. Her mother, now deceased, was a homemaker with a grade school education. Her father, also deceased, had a grade school education plus some training in auto mechanics and was a farmer. Beret was the youngest child of four children. She has a grade 12 plus two years of Normal School education. After having taught school for 24 years she is now retired. Beret married at age 28 and has been married for 41 years. She has two daughters ages 39 and 35, and four grandchildren. Beret and her husband have an income of about $25,000 from her teaching pension, their Senior Citizen pensions, and from revenue from their farm. In her community Beret belongs to several church and traditional women's groups.

In answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?", Beret states that she's had a very full and enjoyable life. She speaks first of what it has meant to her to have a family – to have children and grandchildren. She sees her family as an accomplishment or a contribution to society, enjoys their company and their development and the opportunity of "touching their lives."

> Well, I have sure enjoyed having a family. And I would recommend that nobody should miss getting married and having a family and at least have two children. And I wouldn't think that one would be enough. And I was surely happy to have as many grandchildren as I have. I wish that I even had more now. Oh, I've enjoyed housekeeping and I've enjoyed sewing and I've enjoyed raising my family. And I think it was kind of selfish when I had my family. I always like children so when I had Donna, I thought, 'Well, I'm going to enjoy her while she's little.' So I didn't have Doreen till – Donna would be four when Doreen was born. So I really enjoyed her just to the utmost. And I had Doreen four years later and I sure enjoyed her. Having a family, you feel as though you have accomplished something. You have contributed good citizens to the community or the population, wherever they live. And I enjoyed their company as they grew up and I enjoy their company now. And I think we'd be very lonely if we didn't have our children to visit us and to think about, and the grandchildren to enjoy. I think we'd be very lonely. I look forward to their lives and their accomplishments. And now the grandchildren are growing up; Keith soon will be finished high school. And I am looking forward to what he is going to do, what he is going to be and what he is going to contribute to wherever he lives. It's interesting to see them grow up and to see what they're going to do with their lives. I think it's a privilege to be well and to enjoy them. Keith and Darren have come and spent most of the summer with us, since I think Darren was about two. And we have really been fortunate that we could have those two every summer for all these years. Keith won't be back this year because he's 16 now; he wants to work. But Darren is coming back; he'll be 15. When they come in the summer we feel as though we get to know them. And maybe as we are touching their lives, maybe we're influencing them a little bit. And I think that's part of the richness of a person's life, is to enjoy these young people as they're growing

> up and to know them and to influence them some. And I think that Donna has been very generous to share her children like that with us. I remember when mine were growing up. I didn't even want to leave them overnight because I thought I'd be missing something and I didn't even want to leave them overnight.

Beret spoke again of her family in answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourselfas being powerful?" She speaks of power in terms of having influence, as normal and easy, not dictatorial.

> Well, maybe just influential in my own family. I suppose maybe I wanted my children to grow up healthy and I wanted them to have an education, and hoped that maybe they would have a good outlook on life. And I think maybe that we just felt as though we raised two girls that were – they never, ever were any kind of a problem to us. And they were healthy and they sort of fell in with our plans that they should have an education. So whether they were easily swayed or whether we were very influential, because it was never something that we had to push. It was just something that seemed like we talked about it, and this is the way it was going to be, and this is what they did. And so we had a very enjoyable time raising our family. We did things together. Weekends maybe we'd go to a show and we'd do this or we'd do that. And it seemed like they were doing what they wanted to do but it was always something that we approved of. It just seemed such a normal, easy thing. And whether it was just that they were that kind of people that it just seemed easy – because it wasn't done in a dictatorial way. It just seemed like it was part of every day, and that's the way it turned out.

Verifying her love for children, Beret describes how she also cared for and loved her sister's child, explaining that she would have liked to have had more children of her own if circumstances had been different.

> And my sister, she had one child, and I can remember so well that she always brought us that little girl. We almost raised that little girl because she brought her here every summer when maybe they would go to summer school. Or maybe they would go on a holiday, and Easter maybe they would bring her. And sometimes if she was sick, if she had the measles, they would bring her. And I just loved her. I'm sure I just almost felt like she was mine. And she used to call me Auntie Mommy. And I can remember my sister, when we'd go anywhere and we had that baby, well I was the one that was looking after that baby. I can remember one time her saying, 'Be sure you don't touch me with your sticky hands.' I always remembered that. I thought it was a terrible thing to say. How could you say that to a child? I never forgot it. So if she was sick we had her, and we just had her and we had her and we had her! And I just loved her! We would have had more children, but we were always poor and I said, 'We just can't education more.' That's what I got thinking about. That if we raised and educated two, maybe that would be about our limit. Where I'm sure I would have had four or five, but I figured that it wouldn't be fair to have more than you really could look after. So that's where I drew the line.

Not only has Beret enjoyed her relationships with her children, niece, and grandchildren, but she feels that as a woman she had a chance to be with her children more and have closer contact with them, than did her husband.

> I think too, I suppose maybe it's a selfish way to look at it, but I always think that I was the much luckier member of our family, to be the woman or the mother, because of the enjoyment that I got from raising the family. I was with them more than Peter was, because he was in the field and he was away all day. And I was with them all the time and I enjoyed everything they did, everything they said. So I thought that I really was lucky to be the one to have close contact with those children.

Making a home for her family – a comfortable, clean, pleasant home on a farm, close to nature and with the benefit of fresh food was also important to Beret.

> And housekeeping, well, in a way it's that I've enjoyed having, no *making* a home I think, for my family. A home that's been comfortable and clean and it's also been useful in that I think they, the girls, they learned how to keep house and they learned a sense of responsibility. Because, while I taught, we all had to help. And Donna was the best cleaner, so she always did the cleaning, and Doreen was the best cook, so she always cooked. And now I see the folly of my ways because Doreen is a good cook but she's not quite as good a housekeeper as Donna, and Donna is a perfect housekeeper but she's not as good a cook. Because she never had to – and she mentioned it, too. She said, 'You know, you never did ask me to cook so I never really learned to cook as well as Doreen did.' And that's true! I never thought of it at the time. And I think that they look back at the pleasant, clean surroundings they had. Our house was always lived–in – there was no restrictions, no rules – everybody just enjoyed the space and the furniture and whatever we had. We enjoyed living on the farm. That was such a good place for raising our children. And that's partly why Donna always let us have the boys in the summer, because it was the farm and they could do things that they couldn't do in town. And they learned about the animals and to be with the animals and be kind to them. And I think perhaps we're more healthy because we had a farm life and we raised the food that we ate and the vegetables. And I think that has contributed because we have been lucky to be well.

Being a teacher is another part of Beret's life that she has enjoyed. She speaks mostly of liking the children she taught and touching their lives as they were growing up.

> I don't know what else to say. I've enjoyed doing everything that I've done as a woman. I enjoyed teaching school; I enjoyed the children. I hated to quit but I had to quit sometime. And I still enjoy oh, visiting and speaking with all these children that I've met during the school years. I think why I enjoyed teaching is because I always liked children and young people. It has been very rewarding because I think the lives of all those people, not all maybe but most of them, that I touched, has really – I have enjoyed them as if they were in the neighbourhood or in the community. I enjoyed the association with them as they grew up. And many of them I still haven't lost touch with because they're married and they have families and we visit and we correspond. And I have enjoyed that very much. And I can remember when I taught, by Friday you're kind of tired. But Sunday evening, then I'd start to think about school again and I could hardly wait for Monday morning to come so I could get back and see all of them again.
> And when I was at school, then even those that I had taught – I taught grade nine mostly in junior high – still they were there in grade 10 and you saw them. They were there in grade 11 and you saw them. You saw them graduate, they invited you to their graduation, they invited you to their wedding and that I really enjoyed. It was just very rewarding because they were always so happy to see you and they were happy to visit with you, and they were happy when they got married and had children, they were happy to have you come and see their children. And then another thing too, you felt as though if they did have any difficulties when they were going to school and they made the grade, you felt as though maybe you did something to help them in their life. And I can remember this one young man – and in those

> days in grade nine, they wrote examinations, but if there was a special case where you felt that if you recommended that they would pass, they would allow you to have this person pass – but he had a lot of difficulty with English and his grammar and spelling. But outside of that he was a good student and I thought it was such a shame that he should be a dropout if he didn't go through grade nine. And anyway, he did go through grade nine and he has a very good job today, has a family, is supporting them in good fashion. And it makes you feel good to think that you made that decision.

That she valued her ability to help children in the role of teacher, is evidenced by Beret's answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?"

> I have appreciated my teaching ability because I have had, I should say not compliments, but I have had great satisfaction out of helping individuals. Like one boy came to me and he was having trouble with his math and so I helped him with his math. And his mother said, 'You know, you have made life worth living for our son.' Things like that really mean a lot to me. So I guess maybe I'm lucky that I like children and young people. That's something I have. It's something that I really appreciated that I could do. I am happy that I could help somebody in some way. It just seemed like math especially was something that I could easily help somebody with. I don't know why. Was it just what I did or what? I don't know, but I have tutored quite a number of people, given extra help to quite a number of people who had trouble with math, and it seemed it always just worked. And I can remember my nephew, he was in grade nine and his math marks were so bad. And his parents brought him out and we had a few sessions and he just did so well in his exam and they were so happy. And oh boy, isn't that nice that it helped! And it seemed like especially with math, it just seemed like it was something that worked for me. But it made me feel good to think that I could help somebody.

Beret enjoyed teaching and the contact with the children she taught, but she did not expect to teach after she was married. Although she missed teaching, she was also committed to raising a family, and the social norm of the time was that when a woman married, she did not work outside of the home.

> And when I got married, well I just thought, 'I won't teach anymore. I'll just keep house and raise a family and that'll be it.' I thought that would be my role in life. That's what I would do because I did love children. And then of course we had two because we just thought that two would be all we could educate, because we didn't inherit a farm or inherit anything like lots of people did. And we had lots of setbacks because we had eight years of hail out of ten years, ten harvests. That's the kind of luck we had. It never seemed to be a catastrophe, that was just part of it, that was the way the cookie crumbled and that was it. I didn't ever intend, or think that I was ever going to go back to teaching after I was married. And I can remember that we just lived a short distance from the school, so that in September when the school bell rang I could hear the school bell. And I can remember thinking there, 'I'm not going back teaching and here are these kids are going to school.' But I was quite prepared then not to go back teaching. And I didn't think I would ever go back teaching. It just wasn't done. And I wanted to be home; I just wanted to be home. I think I enjoyed keeping house and I just enjoyed being a woman. I even boarded the teacher. And then we had Donna. And then Donna was old enough to go to school and I thought, 'I decided I'd have a family, so we'd have our family.' And then we had Doreen. And I had no intention of teaching even then. Once I got married I had no intention of ever teaching anymore. That was what generally happened in those days.

However, extenuating circumstances (World War II and a resulting shortage of teachers) over-rode the social expectation that married women belonged in the home, and the need of the community took Beret back to teaching.

> But when Doreen was born there was a shortage of teachers because of the war, was really what happened. And down at the country school they weren't able to get a teacher. And then this friend of mine - she was one of my best friends - she said, 'Why are we looking for a teacher? I'll bet we could get Beret to teach.' So they came and talked about it. And Donna was going to school so that wasn't so bad. Doreen was just about two. So I said, 'Well, if we could get somebody to stay here to look after Doreen and keep house and so on.' And this is what we did. And it wasn't so bad because - and I really thought about this, like, 'I'm going to miss a little bit of what she does,' but the only time I missed was between nine o'clock and 12 noon- because she went to bed right after lunch and she was always still sleeping when I came home from school. So I didn't feel as though I was missing too much.

How much Beret enjoyed teaching and how committed she was to her students, is evidenced in the following passage.

> It was about four miles to the country school and I would pick up these girls. I think I picked up a number of children as I went along, and took them to school. I enjoyed them. And I played with them. I suppose in the summer time or the fall we'd play before school started and then they'd play at recess and then they'd play at noon. And everybody played! The big ones were so - what should I say? More than agreeable - they just included all the little ones. And we played ball mostly, and they all played. The grade one's played, and the big ones played; there were some on either side. And I was always playing with them. And everyone, it seemed like everyone was really special to me. And I can remember being tired by Friday night. But Sunday night I would think about it and I could hardly wait to see Monday morning to see that they were all there and everybody was fine. One thing, I suppose being I was so well, I seldom missed a day. I kind of smile about this because during the time that I was there, well when Doreen got a little bit bigger - I taught at the country school for several years, I think about two or three years - and anyway when she was bigger then we didn't have anybody staying. She would stay with Peter, unless he was in the field, well then she would go with me down to this lady and she would stay there until we came from school. But anyway, during the time that I was teaching there, it was just before Easter and we just had a terrific blizzard. I was at school, it was getting toward about three o'clock or so and I saw that it was storming, but I never did have much respect for the storm anyway. But here Mr. Ramsey came to school with the bob sled and a team and you know he said, 'The children have just all got to go home. You'd better follow me.' I had a pick-up truck. So everybody just bundled up and the ones that went far away - and that was most of them - well, they went with either me or Mr.Ramsey. And I said, 'Oh, I should really try to go home,' I said. And he said 'Well, I'll go to the curling rink and I'll just wait and see how you make out.' Because I knew if I just got over that one hill I could go. Well I started and I just knew that I wasn't going to go, so I just backed up and parked the truck by the curling rink and I went home with Mr. Ramsey. Well, it just was a terrible blizzard and the snow drifted. That was a Thursday and the next day was Friday. You couldn't even see the telephone pole out by Ramsey's house. I was at Ramsey's and Peter was home with the two girls. Well that was Friday and then the storm abated on Friday but all the roads were closed and people couldn't even go with sleighs and horses. And one of the boys had said, 'Well I betcha that she won't get to school Monday morning. I'll bet that we won't have school.' And one of the others said, 'Oh, I don't know, you just never know. She just seems like she always gets here. I don't think were going to get to have a

> holiday.' So I phoned Peter and I said, 'Well there's no way that I can get to school unless I have skis.' And I said, 'If you'll bring skis, I'll meet you partway and I'll get the skis. And bring me a few clothes.' So that was Sunday, and he did. He met me partway down by that church and I got the skis and I got the clothes. And Monday morning we set out for school – the Ramseys had two children. And we skied over seven fences; we didn't even need to lift our skis, there was that much snow. What a joke, seeing those two boys that were at school waiting to see if we were going to come. 'Well, there she comes! No holiday!' So they didn't get a holiday, and I often think of that now. That one boy said, 'She'd likely get here some way.' And you know, we skied to school that whole week – the correction line wasn't open. And the next Friday was Good Friday so then I could go home. I could get down to my truck but to get home I had to go all the way to Highway 13 and come down this road to get home, because all that week and they still hadn't the correction line open. I think what a terrible storm that was!

Beret experienced some conflict around continuing to teach when the war was over. However, the uncertainty of farming plus her desire to provide cultural and educational experiences for her daughters led to her return to teaching. The supposed difficulties of managing a family as well as a career turned into benefits – Beret's daughters learned to take responsibility.

> But I surely did enjoy my years at the country school. And then I thought I'd better quit, so then I didn't teach. But farming is such an uncertain job, you know. And I thought, 'Well, the girls are growing up and there should be music lessons and then planning that they should go to university.' So one day I went to the village school and I said, 'Gee, if you've got a job, I'll come.' And so I taught in the village for years; I don't know how many years I taught there. And anyway, it just seemed like it worked in. It supplemented the income, and now I think too it was all right for the girls because they learned to do lots of things that maybe I would have done, and they got a sense of responsibility. And it really enriched my life to enjoy all those kids. All those young people!
> So I enjoyed it. I enjoyed being to school everyday. I enjoyed the children. And it just seemed everything just clicked along. I sewed just the same, and we'd always try to do whatever weekend work, we'd try to do it Friday after school, and then Saturday and Sunday were family days. And it just worked out. And I think now how much I sewed for the girls when they went to university. I just sewed and sewed and sewed. And it's hard to believe now, I've just gotten so lazy I can hardly believe that I did that. But it seemed like it was no effort at the time. It was just a fun thing. But when I was teaching, the girls would – everybody pitched in, so that was like the cleaning, the washing, the ironing, and all the things that maybe should have been done during the week. We would get it all done and if there was any baking to do, that too.

Quitting her career in teaching was traumatic for Beret. She describes the conflicts she felt and difficult adjustment she experienced in not feeling needed and in losing the close contacts she valued.

> And then I thought I was going to quit and I resigned and then – oh I know, I taught till Christmas and after Christmas we were going to go South. So we went and then that year another school needed a teacher for six weeks because this lady was pregnant. So I went down there and I thought, 'Well, I'll just teach this six weeks and that'll be it.' And the last day that I was teaching there, I got a phone call from Mr.White in the city and he said, 'Oh, you know, we sure would like to have you teach in this open area, in this new school.

> Team teaching!' 'Oh', I thought, 'I decided I was going to quit.' And then I thought, 'Wouldn't it be fun to go into a new school, and they had such a nice library.' So I went in there. Then I taught in there for three years. And then I got thinking, 'Oh, Peter wanted to go South all the time' and then I quit again. And I hated to quit. And then I thought, 'Well, so many people quit when they're sick and crippled and can't teach anymore, and that's kind of silly. You should quit while you're able bodied so that you can enjoy a few years.' Then I quit. And then I thought, 'I shouldn't have quit; maybe I should go back.' And then I got to thinking, 'Well, sometime I'm going to have to endure this, that I've quit, so maybe I should just do it now.' And you know, I think it was about three months that I just really thought what a terrible thing I had done and I thought, 'Should I go back?' And I was really kind of half-sick for about three months after. I wasn't forced to retire but I thought that I would like to travel a little bit. And Peter was free in the winter and we could go away in the winter. He was wanting to go away in the winter, and as long as I taught we couldn't go away. And I thought, 'Well, I'll just quit and we'll enjoy some of these things.' So one fall Doreen and I went to Norway in October. And every winter since I have quit, we've been going down South and visiting with Peter's relatives and enjoying the climate down there. I thought that was something we should do. But it was hard, very hard. And at that time I heard of some lady, I think she lived or taught in a nearby division, that she just couldn't hack it. I think she still is in the Oliver Mental Hospital. It was really upsetting for me to quit. I missed that contact, that I wouldn't be seeing those children. Still I didn't just quit, because I worked with slow learners for about two or three years after I quit teaching in the classroom. But it wasn't the same. I just thought I wasn't needed. They could get along without you. And it was that association with those young people that I really missed. And I did some tutoring too and of course I enjoyed that, but afterwards it wasn't the same. The contact wasn't as close.

The close contacts she experienced with her students are clearly important to Beret. She describes how her continued contact with her students have added to the meaning of her life.

> Just the other day - one boy that I had in high school - and he was just a very ordinary person, but somehow he just sort of had something about him. It seemed like I had a lot of preparation to do in those days and I'd say, 'Well, at noon hour I'm just going to work like mad.' And at noon hour, especially in the winter when there wasn't outdoor sports, here my friend would come. And he would just sit in the front seat and visit with me that noon hour. And this just happened as long as the weather was so, that the boys didn't go outside to do something - he'd be there. Well, I just enjoyed this so much and I just got such a kick out of him - somehow it was just so different. But he graduated and he had a job and he went to Hawaii, and here I didn't even know he was in Hawaii and here came a nice little gift for me from Hawaii. Who in the world was in Hawaii sending me a gift? And here it was Bob! Well! And then a few years went by and one Sunday a lovely car drove up out here and a nice looking young man, and I said to Peter, 'Who in the world is that? It isn't anyone I know.' And here it was Bob, come for a visit! And I see him once in awhile. His folks live nearby and he comes home for Christmas and I see him once in a while and I think, 'What a pleasure I've sure had out of Bobby.' Lots of things have happened to Bobby, but he's done well. Now I don't know if you remember - do you remember a boy that was in grade seven when you were teaching? He was kind of a problem. He was a Bob too. But he wasn't bad; he had lost his mother and he was one of about five or six children, and I think maybe only the oldest one was at school when the mother passed away. And he had a very, just a firm father. And I can remember we were worried about Bobby because Bobby was always having some kind of a little trouble or something. But Bobby's fine today. He grew into a fine, tall young man and he's married and he's got a good job. Don't you think about those people? And something else that I think about -

like you know a lot of the children that you have met, they move away, and maybe they moved away when they were quite young and then you just lose all track of them, where they've gone. And it's such a good feeling to hear, 'Well this is where they are and they're fine and they're happy.'

Friends she made while teaching were also important to Beret. She describes what she learned from and valued in a woman she had boarded with before she was married.

I always think about a lady that I boarded with when I was teaching, before I was married. She was such a wise person; she'd had six children. But anyway, I always remember this one thing that she had said. She said, 'You know, so many people find fault with their teacher. Like all their children sure didn't do well with this teacher, or they didn't learn anything. But you know, it's a funny thing, my children had the same teacher, and they always made a grade a year. And that's all that mattered,' she said. 'Always made a grade a year!' And I thought, 'Isn't that true!' She was such a wise person. I always remember that. And she was such an interesting person! Do you remember the poem, *My Mother's Words*? Anyway, that was one of the poems in the grade nine reader when I taught grade nine. And I always thought of that lady whenever I taught that poem. Because she had that gift, that whatever she described to you – like if she'd been on a journey or if she had done something, she could describe it so beautifully that you just felt as though you were right there with her. When I boarded there, she, her husband and her sons had taken homesteads up on the border between Saskatchewan and Alberta, up by Cold Lake. And sometimes she would go with them up there, just for maybe a week or so. And then she'd come back, she'd tell all about her journey there and what they did and the people she met and everything. And I always thought of her – how beautifully she could describe everything. Just like you relived her trip, you know? She was a wonderful lady! And what a good friend she turned out to be! I was just like part of her family. And I enjoyed her all her life. And I can remember when I went there. I guess she had six children and here this table was all pulled out so long, the first time I was there, and I said, 'Are you having company?' 'No, just my own,' she said. So I enjoyed just thinking, all through the years, I just think of all the good friends I made teaching all those young people.

The importance of her relationships, family, and friends, to Beret, is verified in her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

Well, I think most of all I value my family and my friendships. I value people. People that I have been in contact with, and people that I have been close to. I think that I would have a very empty life if I didn't have children. I just can't – well I think of people who haven't any children and I suppose I shouldn't imagine what they're like. But maybe because I'm the kind of a person I am, maybe that's why I value my children and my friendships. Maybe some people think that they wouldn't want to be me or they wouldn't value children, and I know because there are people who deliberately don't have families. But I just think that anybody who has children that turn out well and who has friends that they appreciate, I think really are wealthy. I think they are. And I think that life would surely be empty without them – your family and your friends and the people that you know. How rich it makes your life! And the experiences and the contacts that you have with each one of these people – because each one of these things is, like each person is so different – and from each person you have gotten so much from that relationship. And it's different for every one. Like I was telling you about that lady I boarded with, how I enjoyed her. And I can remember I had a best friend and I went through high school with her and I stayed with them. And her mother was such a sort of a philosophical person and she only had Beatrice. And she said, 'You know, I always planned that I was going to have two girls,' she said. 'And I thought I would call one Beatrice and one Beret' she said. She said, 'Well I got Beatrice, and now you've come along and I've

got Beret too,' she said. And I can remember how we used to grumble because, oh we'd come home from school and then we had homework. And I can remember her saying to us, 'You know,' she said, 'these are the best years of your life. If you only knew it. These are the best years of your life.' And I thought, 'Ugh! That's what you think!' And it isn't very long ago that I said that to Keith, to my grandson. I said, 'Keith, if you only knew it, these are the best years of your life.' I said, 'You have no responsibilities; you're young and you're healthy.' And how true it was. And then another thing I can remember this lady said – like they moved away from here and they moved way out oh, I think somewhere near Buck Lake. But she was a person that could always make a home out of whatever. If it was a cottage or a room or a what, it just got homey and wonderful. And I went there to visit them. But anyway they had this neighbour who had such a terrible temper. And everytime he lost his temper he would beat his wife and his sons, and they would all come running over to her place. And then he would come because he knew where they were. And so she said, "I said to him one day, 'you know, you're a wealthy man. You've got lots of money and you've got properties, and I'm just a poor person. We're just renting here and we're poor. But I'm richer than you are. I wouldn't trade places with you for anything. Because you've got that terrible temper. I wouldn't trade with you for all the money that you've got.'" And I thought, 'Well, isn't that true!' So there's two people, and I think I could almost think of every person–well I shouldn't say every person – but I can think of so many people, and I can think of specific things that have been profitable and enjoyable to me, things that we've done together and outlooks that they had on life. That I've really enjoyed! I can say that people I have really enjoyed, and I still enjoy – things that they do, things that you do together.

Another part of being a woman for Beret, is belonging to community organizations where she can contribute to her community, learn from other members and once again, enjoy the close relationships that develop.

I suppose that what you have contributed to your community as a woman is perhaps satisfying too. I belong to a number of community organizations where people are always working toward something that will be useful for the community or we have a ladies group. But they do all kinds of things in the community and for the center in the community. And whatever I have been able to contribute that way, if it's any skills that I have like knitting or crocheting or sewing, that I have shared as well. And I have sure enjoyed the fellowship of the ladies in the community organizations that I belong to. I think that if I didn't do any of these things that I would feel as though I wasn't of much value to my community. I think that it makes you feel as though you have contributed something by belonging and working with these groups, these organizations, and perhaps contributing your ideas. And I think that everyone perhaps in the organization, maybe each lady is an individual and maybe you have learned something special from each one. And maybe I think that maybe their characteristics have had something to do with your own, like being the person that you turned out to be. Perhaps you've learned to be more tolerant and more thoughtful and more considerate, because we all have failings I think, and by associating with these people I think that it makes you a different person. And the fellowship is something that I really enjoy. So often I wouldn't miss a meeting, not because of what the meeting is going to contribute maybe to my life or to my knowledge or whatever it is, but it's the seeing these people and enjoying their views and enjoying their company. That's what I enjoy about the organizations I belong to. And I get to know each one better and it seems like you're very close because you're concerned about their health and their family and anything about their lives. And it's wonderful to be so close. They're just really like – they become part of your family, really. And I always think through the years that my sister and my brother have lived a good distance from me, and I just feel as though these people that are in my community, I feel really as close or even closer to them

than I do to members of my own family.

The tie to and interest in other people is also present in Beret's enjoyment in entertaining. Into this experience, however, has crept a concern that perhaps just being together is not enough – that one must 'entertain' one's guests – a concern not experienced by Beret when she was younger.

> I really enjoy the fellowship of when we entertain people. I like to have people over – free to come and enjoy the food, if there's food – and I enjoy their company. And over the years, not so much now as we did when the children were younger, we used to have a lot of summer company that would come and stay and that was our summer – having company and visitors who would stay. And I really enjoyed it! It seems like it happened in a time in my life when it just seemed like it fell into place. It wasn't a hardship to have them, or I never worried about, 'Oh, is somebody else coming or will there be too many?' It just seemed like if it was yours it was what you hoped would happen. And you did it and you never worried. It wasn't a hardship of any kind. Now I think more – like we had company from Norway and I thought, 'Oh, how will I entertain them? Will they be bored? Will they enjoy the food?' And so on. But in those years when we had most of the company I never even gave it a thought. I think maybe that I think about those things now, maybe that they're important. I think I didn't think about them then because I didn't think that that part was important. I just thought, that just being together was the important thing. And now I'm beginning to think about these things. I don't know if it is important or not, but then I don't know. Maybe I was just busy and enjoying everybody and everything and it never ever came to mind. Now I question if there maybe is some other factors maybe would affect, should I say, the pleasant time that they would have when they are with us. You know, wonder if you could improve on what we're doing so that they would enjoy being with us more. But I can remember then, people just came and went and we just had a wonderful time. We never worried or fretted like now, 'Are they going to be bored, or are we showing them a good time?' I don't know why. Maybe I'm just thinking about those things now. Maybe then I just never gave it a thought, maybe because we were younger or busier, I don't know.

Beret does not see the closeness she values, with her friends, her community, her former students, as being remarkable. Rather, she sees it as ordinary. She does, however, relate her being a woman to this rich aspect of her life.

> I can't think of anything else especially. My life's been just very, very ordinary. I really appreciate the people that I have met and maybe I should say the women that I have met, mostly, because I suppose being a woman I have women friends and women associates. But I think about a young person who stayed with us once and helped us – he was a young man. He stayed here and he helped harvest and he said, 'You know, I think all the nicest people in the world live around here.' And you know, I had never thought about it before but I have thought about it now. I think he was about – maybe he was 16, about like Keith when he was here helping with the harvest. And that was hard work. And he'd remark about how kind and thoughtful everyone was. And what has brought this more to mind I think, lately, and maybe I didn't think about it so much before, was I had always thought that, 'Well, someone in the community should gather pioneers' stories and collect the history of the area.' And you know, you think these things should be done, and well, somebody's got to take the initiative and say, 'Well, let's do it.' So I thought, 'Well, if I don't, if I'm not instrumental in doing it, who's going to do it?' So then I decided I was going to do it. And then I told the people in the neighbourhood and I was just amazed at the cooperation and the response and the

willingness for people to give me their pictures and their stories. It was just fantastic! And then you really come to appreciate those people. They're really the salt of the earth! I don't think, I suppose if I'd been a man, I wouldn't have had that – wouldn't have had those experiences. I think I've had a much richer life than Peter has. I feel that I have, anyway. Because of the contact with the people. Poor Cheryl, just think what you had to listen to. I'm so emotional – and I can remember that when I talked to Doreen about my pupils, I had tears in my eyes. And I can remember, oh dear, I think that's just the way I am, that's all. I'm just like that. That's it. I prize all those friendships and all those little encounters that I've had with all people – I'll just say people.

As in the case of her relationship to her children and her friends, there are other aspects of Beret's life that she enjoys and sees as particular to being a woman, namely, her social life, having a variety in clothing, and perhaps now an interest in her ancestorial background.

I'm trying to think now what else, what other aspect of being a woman? Well, I suppose because you are a woman, I don't suppose that you'd wish that you weren't because I think that every woman enjoys her social life. I wouldn't want to be the man in the family. And I enjoy the things that a woman does socially. For instance, I enjoy dancing and I enjoy wearing nice clothes and I enjoy maybe the courtesies that women are shown, and I enjoy entertaining friends. The dancing, I suppose part of it is the company of the people. And if you're a good dancer you maybe have sort of a sense of accomplishment that you are a good dancer. And it sort of makes you pleased to think that you are a good dancer and that people enjoy dancing with you. And I think that as a woman – a man can go and ask anyone he likes to dance and maybe they aren't as joyous dancing with him, but they dance with him anyway. But when you're a woman, they come and ask you to dance usually because you're a good dancer, and that sort of makes you feel that you have accomplished something, and you're a good dancer, and they like to dance with you. It's a compliment.

And maybe wearing nice clothes – I don't know that I would say being well-dressed, but I think maybe women have a good chance to have a variety of clothing more than men. Men usually just have suits. And you could have a new dress and it gives you a good feeling to think that you are well-dressed. I don't think that I was ever extravagant because I had a variety of clothing. And so because I have done a lot of sewing, I haven't felt that I have been extravagant. But I always seem to have gotten a lot of pleasure out of just having a new dress every once in a while – to go somewhere and to have a new dress.

And I don't know, do you think maybe because you're a woman that you're interested in your ancestors? I wasn't when I was younger but now I enjoyed going to Norway to see where my mother grew up and enjoyed visiting her home. I haven't been to where my dad lived but I think we'll go. I had a cousin that went back there and she said that the foundation and the chimney or something of the house where my dad was raised, was still there. But the house was in ruins.

Summing up what it has meant to her to be a woman, Beret states:

Well, to say what's it's meant to be a woman, I think that because I have been a woman, I think that I have had a very full and enjoyable life. And maybe because I had the kind of a mother that I had, that kept me healthy, that I had been very well and I've been able to just enjoy every day and every year. And I suppose I've been lucky too. I just enjoy my friends and it just seems like every day I've got something to look forward to. I have never wanted to be an outstanding public figure or anything. But I've enjoyed my life and I've enjoyed my years and I've enjoyed my association with my family and my children and my friends. And I've enjoyed doing the things that a

woman can do, like crafts and social activities.

Reflecting on how she came to be the kind of woman she is today, Beret spoke in detail of her childhood and of her mother's and father's influence on her. She perceived her mother as a very resourceful and practical person, and as generous to others.

> My mother was really a very resourceful and practical person. She came out as a pioneer. And I can remember she had sheep and she thought she should have sheep because she made her yarn, she dyed the wool, she knit stockings and sweaters and so on. And then she was quite far sighted. At one time when the telephones came in, all the neighbours got telephones and she had the telephone put in too. And then the depression came and all the neighbours took out their phones because they couldn't afford to keep the phones. But she said, 'Somebody's got to keep a phone. I'll be the one to keep the phone.' So she kept the phone and all the neighbours came to use the telephone. She kept the phone. And I can remember when they decided to build this house, that my dad said, 'Well, you can have one of two things. You can have a powerplant so you can have electric lights, or you can have running water.' She said, 'I'll take the running water.' And I can remember, the years and years that we had running water. And I suppose because we had running water, she boarded the teacher.
> I suppose something else that I learned from my mother, she was really generous where other people were concerned. If she had it and they needed it, they got it. Or if somebody was sick or something – I can remember people that came here and they needed, I don't know what kind of ailment this lady had but she needed all kinds of bandages. And I can remember she just gave them good sheets to tear up into bandages. And I can remember too, and I don't suppose that I was too big, but I can remember I had a doll – and we lived in the old house – and it was called a grumpy doll, it had a cranky look on its face. And I can remember people came and the child didn't have a doll and she gave the child that grumpy doll. And I really wasn't very happy; I was very upset because she gave away that grumpy doll. And I can remember something else she gave away, because it was a collar and a muff that matched. Somebody had given it to me. And somebody came there with a child and she thought that they needed it and so she just gave it away without even asking. And I never was very happy about that. But that was one of her things. She was always ready to help somebody. It didn't matter – if she had it, they got it. She always fed everybody that came. They had that small house, and if strangers came that needed to stay overnight, there were wall-to-wall people and it didn't matter. And something else I always used to marvel at was that if a bunch of people came in unexpectedly – I didn't marvel at it until I got older – she always could find something to feed everybody. I'm not like that. I have to plan first, but she never did. And it seemed like she could always think of something to feed all those people. I don't think I'm as resourceful as she was. I don't have to be. But she could do it.

Beret perceived her mother as a thinker, and as having taught her to think too.

> And I didn't think ahead. And if she had a problem or if I had a problem, she'd always say, 'Well now, let me think.' And it seemed to me that she taught me to think. And I think that's one of the most important things in life, is to think. I can remember lots of times when I'd have a problem and I'd ask her, 'Well, what should I do about this?' And she'd say, 'Well, just let me think.' And I'd think, 'Oh dear! This is just a waste of time, this wait and just let me think.' But then I'd always be amazed what she'd come up with after she had had a chance to think about it. And I think that that was something really important – that you really should take time to think, that to think is really important. And she really was a thinker. And I know that because she was far sighted.

> We never really knew that there was a depression. We never felt that depression, those dirty thirties. We didn't feel it because I think she got $15 a month for having the councillors and she always raised chickens, she sold eggs, and we didn't really know. But she still wanted us to be thrifty you know. I can remember when I was in high school and I'd say, 'Well I'll pick a piece of cloth because I want a dress to go to something or other.' And she would say, 'Well now, try to be a little practical. Don't buy something that you'll wear just to a party. Buy something that is practical, that you can use.' And when I heard during the war – well I can't remember anything about the first World War but the second World War I remember them saying, 'Well, you should save all your good things and save this and don't throw anything away.' And I always used to think, 'That's all I've ever known. My mother always did that! Isn't that funny? Here they're telling people to do this and all I've ever known is to do this– to never throw away any food, be thrifty and save the drippings.' I can remember when we had goose or turkey or chicken, and if it was fat she never ever threw away any of the fat. She'd make buns or she'd make bread. So I learned to be thrifty.

Beret also saw her mother as strong, both mentally and physically, as determined,and as a person who could both laugh and cope with the inevitable crises of a pioneer farming life. Beret perceives herself as being strong like her mother, and she has adopted her mother's concern for a healthy diet.

> And when I visited her brother in Norway, he always said about what a strong person she was, not physically but he said that when she made up her mind that she was going to go to America, when she started walking down the road away from home, he said she just waved once and she never looked back. And he said even as a young girl how kind she was. He said he can remember that she looked out the window and saw an elderly person, just pulling this heavy sled full of wood, and he said she got out there right away and helped. But she was a very determined person too, if she made up her mind that she thought you should. She was trying to find a means to an end.
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> My mother was a very happy person and when I think of her, I always think about how she laughed and how jolly she was. But she was a firm person too. She was very accommodating and everything, but I always think about how she laughed. When we went to Norway there was a relative, she would be my mother's cousin, but she just was a replica of my mother. She laughed at everything. No matter what happened, nothing was a catastrophe. Mother could always laugh. And it seemed like the things that happened in our family, like if there was an accident or something, it never got her down. She always coped with it. And my dad, I remember that they were fixing the well and he had a tripod up and they pulled up part of the pump. He was down pulling up some pipes or something, and the rope slipped or broke or something, and it came down and hit him at the back of the head and cut an artery. And blood was just shooting. And of course I was small then, we were in the old house. And I can remember him coming in and lying on the couch and she just had a big bucket of flour, and she just kept putting the flour on it, and put flour on it, and put flour on it. She didn't call the doctor, and didn't have any way to rush him anywhere. I remember that so well. It seemed like she never panicked. I can remember when my brother was hurt in the threshing machine. He was putting a dressing on a belt or something with his hand, and his hand slipped and his arm went around between the pulley and the belt and his whole body was flipped around. And he had his jaw broken in two places and the muscles were squished off his arm. But I can never remember her being really down. Something happened, she just coped with it. And that's the way she always was. And in between she would always laugh and joke and be a jolly person. I'm not that jolly. But I think I learned about being strong from her. I think so. I think so. I think so. And I think when we've been so lucky, I often think of that.

> I think almost every day in my life how fortunate our own family has been to be well and not have any serious illnesses or anything like that. And I just think how fortunate we were. And I can remember how proud she always was that how well we were. She was a health person. Like we had whole wheat bread and she ground the wheat and made porridge, and I think that I learned that from her too a little bit. That even though we thought maybe fluffy white bread tasted better, I think that maybe I learned from her too that it was better to eat things that kept you healthy. Yes, I think maybe the strong part I learned from her. And the other day a lady was here and she said, 'Have you ever had a depression?' And I said, 'No, I haven't.' And you know, when I think back, my mother never had either. And I think, 'Well, maybe if you learn to be strong you could avoid such a thing maybe.'

That good health is important to Beret is validated by her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> I value my health. I think I'm so lucky. The lady that was here yesterday she said, "You know, I saw a chart and it said, 'Don't grumble about growing old, it's a privilege.'" And I think that you're lucky that you're well. And I can remember seeing my dad's aunt – oh, she was in her 90's and she had pernicious anemia so that she wasn't very well. And I can remember her saying, 'Oh' she said, 'I'm so useless' she said. 'I'm just so useless, I can't do anything that's worthwhile.' And I said, 'Well, we're just happy to have you around so that you can just see what all the rest of us are doing.' And I just think that's really a fun part of your life, is to see what your friends are doing and see your children and your grandchildren. And I think somebody's lucky when they can go to their granddaughter's wedding or their grandson's wedding. I think that's just a real privilege – to be able to be healthy so you can look after yourself and enjoy that part of your life.

The issue of good health comes up again, in conjunction with having a sound mind, in answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?"

> What do I value in myself? Well, I value my good health. And another thing that I value, is being of sound mind.

Believing that coping with life's difficulties also make us stronger, Beret ponders on the role of fate, and on the lack of alternatives experienced by women in times past.

> And when I look at Donna and well you too, Cheryl, how you have coped with being divorced. And Donna is just right out there right ahead. It makes you stronger, doesn't it? So I mean, Mrs. Caldwell, I think she said she thought when that happened to her family, she thought that she had failed somewhere. And I said, 'Well, I don't know how you could blame yourself, the parents.' But it happens and I think something good comes out of it. It seems a tragedy at the time, but some good comes out of it, doesn't it? And I think that that's just fate or just life or just something that's meant to make you a better person. It's just one of the lessons or something, along the way. Like it isn't a – what should I say? It's just one of those things that, well unless it's planned, but it just seems like one of those things in your life. But there was no alternative back then. Because maybe you had two or three children or 10, and your husband was the breadwinner and you had no profession. And you couldn't leave and there was no welfare. I'm sure there were those things happened in those days. We had a neighbour lady down here and she had three daughters and her youngest daughter, when she was 17, she decided she wanted to be married. And her mother said, well she was telling about it and she said, "Well, I couldn't say, 'You can't, you're too young to be married,' because she knew I was married when I was 17." And so they were married and after not too long a time, one day she came home with her suitcase and her mother said, 'And what are you doing?' 'Oh,' she said, 'I have

> left Mike.' And the mother said, 'You just take your suitcase and go back. You picked it, you wanted him, you just go back there.' And the daughter went back. I just think that it must have taken quite a bit of courage to say that. But I thought, 'You were pretty smart.'

That Beret learned from her mother to act with determination in order to accomplish her goals, and to act on the basis of her moral standards is evidenced by her answers to the question, "In what ways have you experienced being powerful?"

> Well, I don't know if I feel powerful, but I've always, what should I say, felt that I have determination and drive. And if I decide that I am going to do something it seems like I have the will power to surmount the obstacles. It isn't something that I put off. I do it! Well, we'll say, for instance, when we started this history book and there was a lady that offered to help me, and not very many people offered to help. So we launched this thing. Neither one of us had any experience doing this kind of thing. And then she had a nervous breakdown and I lost her help completely. And then there was no one to rely on except me. And I had decided I was going to do it so I was just like the little red hen and I did the jobs that needed to be done and it got done. Whether I want to reupholster something or make a wedding dress or well, if I decide that I'm going to do it, I find that if I've made up my mind to do it, I do it and get it done. And I get satisfaction out of that. I'm not somebody that puts it off - that I've got something to do and I'll do it sometime. I like to do it now. And I don't know whether that's good or bad, but it makes me feel good to do it now and get it done. And I have the will power. Like suppose you have some difficulties, you still get it done, still manage some way and do it.
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> I don't think there are any other ways. Well, maybe that I'm firmly set or established in my ideals or something. Do you think? I suppose that I have certain ideas about right and wrong and I'm not easily swayed. If I think it's right, it's right! I think I always feel it isn't profitable or it never works out to, shall I say, try to get out of a bad situation by stalling or maybe by changing the subject or something. That it's there and you've got to deal with it! And that's always the best way.
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> But I've always felt that if you try to put it off or try to get out of it in some, well not illegal way, but unconventional way, it never pays off. It doesn't right itself like it should. I can think of one time where I had a student - she was a Home Ec. student. And my supervisor said, 'Don't let them take their sewing home with them because you don't know whether they're doing it or whether the mother is doing it or somebody is helping them.' So that was one of the rules - that you are not to take it home with you. And golly, one day I looked out the window and here this girl was taking her stuff home with her. So I ran out and I said, 'Oh, you know, you're not allowed to take it home. I can't let you take it home.' And she was so upset and I said, 'Well I'm sure you would do it yourself, but if it's the rule for the rest of us, it's got to be the rule for you too.' And the look on her face! I could see she felt real resentful but I thought, 'Well, it's got to be done.' So even if I was in a bad light, I felt I had to face her directly. It was a rule and the rest of them had to follow the rule and sure, I could have let her go, but then it would have made more trouble for me afterwards. It didn't pay off.

The above passages demonstrate how Beret's mother, by herself being resourceful, practical, thrifty, generous, determined, competent and strong, provided for Beret a positive model of just such a woman. Beret also perceives her mother as having taught her to be independent and self-confident by giving her a great deal of freedom and a great deal of responsibility. She describes a conversation she had with her mother

about the freedom she was given.

> I think at one point I mentioned to my mother, I said, 'You know, you never ever worried about what I was doing or what I did.' 'No', she said, 'because I always felt as if you could look after yourself,' she said. And I can remember, I think maybe – well, I'm sure I couldn't have been more than about 11 years old, and I had gone with some neighbours to a barn dance. And I can remember walking up that road and the sun was coming up in the morning. Nobody worried that I would come home when the sun was coming up. I can remember mentioning that to her and I said, 'Wasn't that an awful time for somebody my age to be coming home?' I had gone with a family, but even so I thought, 'Isn't that awful?'

Elsewhere Beret describes the tricks her mother used to teach her to be skillful and confident – tricks that included both leaving her alone with responsibilities and involving people outside the family as instructors.

> And I can remember that she had lots of little schemes to accomplish things that she thought would be useful in raising a family.
> She would say, 'Well, you can have a new dress if you will sew the dress.' And so we thought we were doing fine. We were getting as many new dresses as we wanted, but she was seeing to it that we learned to sew. She did it in such an indirect way and I think she sort of felt that if she didn't do it that way, that we would oppose her and we wouldn't learn. So she said, 'Well now, I won't help you with this, but if you want to do this dress well, this lady over here sews. And if you like you could go over there and she'll show you how to do it.' I'm sure she felt as though I would take instruction or be corrected more easily by somebody else than I would be by her. I can remember this. I think that I learned to appreciate my mother a great deal, when I think back to it now. And I really am glad that she was so foxy, because I learned a great many things. And maybe because we had a big house she used to have councillors come and have their meetings here and they had to be fed. And I would often help her with the meal. And one day the councillors were to come and she said, 'Well, today I'm going to go and spend a day with one of the neighbours who is sick, and you're going to look after the meal.' My heart just sank and I thought, 'Oh, to do this all by myself!' But she went and I had to do it and I did it. I suppose I was maybe about 14, 15. It was tricks like that that she would do. That sewing one I always thought, 'Well, you foxy lady!' That really was the best trick I think she had.

That Beret did indeed learn from her mother skills that she values is supported by her answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?"

> And I'm happy that I have acquired any skills that I have, because I feel like I won't be lonely. I always have something to do and to occupy my mind or my time. I can knit, and I can sew, and I can weave, and I can crochet, and I can embroider, and I can make things of all kinds with my hands. And I'm a person that I like to be doing something all the time. If I sit down I like to visit or I like to read or I like to do something with my hands. And so I think, 'Well, I'm lucky!' And I'm lucky that I enjoy doing those things I think too. I think that Doreen was saying that they had visited Bill's grandmother in this home, and she said, 'And there were two little elderly Ukrainian ladies sitting with their hands folded.' And Doreen said, 'And how are you today?' And this lady said, 'Nothing to do. Nothing to do. Nothing to do.' And wasn't it sad that they had nothing to do? So I think that I'm lucky.

Finally, Beret credits her mother with influencing her to obtain an education.

> But back to becoming a teacher, that was my mother's influence. That was my mother, that we were to be something. We must *be something*! And she used to say – now maybe that was another of her tricks – she said, 'I'm going to see that you get an education and you can be whatever you want to be, and that's fine. But you're not going to be left anything in a will or anything because this is what you're going to get. You're going to get an education! And if there's any money or property or anything, then the brothers are going to get it.' I had two brothers. And those two brothers you see, they both went to technical school, so one or two years maybe they go to technical school or something. But in those days it was really an expense to educate a girl because you didn't have a high school. You went to public school and your country school, but then you had to board or batch or whatever to get to go to high school and to finish your teacher training. So that was quite a drain and all. So that's what she had said. 'That's what you're getting!' So the boys got the farm, and we got the education. And I don't know, I suppose because when I look back at it and I think, 'Well, that was all right. That was a good alternative.' I remember I said that to my girls, I said, 'Get your education because maybe that's the only thing that you'll ever get from us. So get your education! Go through university or do something!' And I can remember too that my mother said, 'They need teachers, and we've got lots of people who can do house work and be maids and waitresses and so on. We don't need those people but we do need teachers.' And mother thought nurse, because I was a big, strong person. She thought I should be a nurse.
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> Well, there wasn't much choice in those days. It seemed like there were only two things – you could either be a nurse or you could be a teacher. My mother always used to think – well, my sister, she knew was going to be a teacher, so she thought that she would like me to be a nurse. But I didn't think that I would like to be a nurse, and at that time it seemed like that was the only two things there was for a girl to do. So that's how I got to be a teacher.

Beret's relationship with her mother held one flaw, however. It seemed to Beret that her mother favored Beret's more feminine sister, resulting in a feeling on Beret's part that because she was a tomboy she was less exceptable.

> I think that I was more of a tomboy than my sister was. And my sister, I think that maybe, I always felt that maybe she was my mother's, well, shall we say was special to my mother. And she was! She could embroider and crochet and sew very nicely, and I was more of a tomboy and I was the one that was out – I milked the cows and I got the cows.
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> But my mother favored my sister, who was more feminine and more accomplished, and she was a clever person. I always felt as though I was the black sheep, or I wasn't really very clever. Really, I don't think that I thought about being a girl or that I was feminine or anything until maybe the last year of public school. Because it seemed that all the things that I was doing and all the associations that I enjoyed were with my dad and my brother. And my mother and my sister, they had a close relationship because she really was doing the things that I suppose my mother, should I say thought were enjoyable, or perhaps the things that a girl should do.

This feeling that she was not feminine, was reinforced by a neighbor who consistently commented on Beret's size. In answer to the question "What do you regret or resent in your life?" Beret related the following painful experience:

> I guess all of us say things without thinking. I can always remember, I was always big for my age and I can always remember this one place that we visited, every time we'd go there I can remember, that was my greeting – 'My but you're big!' I think that's the only thing that I can ever remember that anyone has ever said to me that I think, 'Ugh!.' But I know she didn't mean anything. I was a big person. But if she'd known how that made me feel – I used to just almost cringe because I knew that was the first thing she was going to say. I was self–conscious about being tall. Yes I was. And she was a good person, you know, but I never forgot it and I always think, I used to think back and I thought, 'She didn't know how she was hurting me.' But isn't it awful how we do say things, and thoughtlessly.

Beret's perception that her size was unacceptable was reinforced by her awareness of an ideal image for women portrayed in the media. Beret explains, in answer to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?"

> Well, I dislike my size and my shape. I'm such a big person! I envy people who are a nice average size or who are small and dainty, and who've got nice little hands. I've got big hands and I've got big feet, and I always admire somebody that is an average size or is small and dainty. I just think that I'm conspicuous for one thing, and maybe ungainly, and I feel self–conscious about it. I'd rather not be conspicuous; I'd rather just be in the ordinary range. I'd rather be like an average person is. I'm bigger than average, I'm taller than average, my hands are bigger than most woman's hands. I've got hands like my dad I think, more than like my mother. I've got big feet. So I think that about myself is the thing that I don't like the most. It seems like that idea of women being dainty – well I don't know, it just seems like it's something that's been passed down through what? – three generations, in books, in movies and things like that. They're always the pretty ones and the dainty ones and so you think, 'Well, that's the ideal situation. Maybe you would be more attractive if you weren't so big or so bony and angular and whatever.' That started when that lady used to comment on my size. That started it, and all my life I've been conscious of that. And it just seems to me that any stories that you read or when we went to movies or anything, then it was everybody was ideal. They were pretty and they were feminine. And I was more masculine than feminine. And people I think that I admired were always smaller and daintier than I was. And I can remember going to high school – they had this one lady teacher and she was, it just seemed like she was such an ideal person. And she had such pretty clothes and she always had shoes to match just about every dress she wore. And I thought, 'Oh, someday I hope that I'll have shoes to match the dresses that I wear.' And I don't know, it just seemed like I resented that I was always big. But I'm glad that I'm healthy. So I suppose you can't have everything. I think I dislike that most and I can't think of anything else especially.

The strength of this feeling and its pervasiveness is evidenced by her partial answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?"

> Oh, I don't know if there's anything I like about myself. I'm sure not happy about my size or my shape. Well, I think those are about the only things that I am happy about – my health and my sound mind, and the things that I can do to enjoy my life.

Although not looking feminine is something Beret is still self–conscious about today, she feels good about the skills she learned because she was strong and able, unlike her sister who acted like a "lady." She has resolved her early feelings of resentment toward her sister, understanding now that her sister used her femininity to avoid work. Having

spent much time with her brother, she developed a close relationship with him that she appreciates.

> In a way I sometimes resented my sister a little bit, because she was smart enough so that she didn't want to go out and do the work that was outside work. She never learned to milk the cow – she pretended she was afraid of the cow. And she never learned to drive a car – she pretended she was afraid of cars. And when we had a washing machine with a motor she never washed clothes because she was afraid of the motor. But when I look back I really am happy that I was a tomboy because I learned to ride horses, to harness a horse and to milk cows and drive a car and drive machinery. And I think that it has just added to the accomplishments in my life and I am happy for everything that I ever learned. And my brother, the one older than I was, we were very close because he and I associated with one another. And she would never join in any of our activities. She preferred to read or to sit and embroider or something like that. And to this day I still am really very close to that brother. And I enjoyed that. But she never had to go out and get the cows; she was frightened. But at that time I didn't realize it so much, well like at first. But then as I grew a little older, like say when I got to be about 11, 12 or so on, when I realized she was just outwitting all of us by just being a lady. She was smart. I've never regretted that I learned all these things.

Being a tomboy also resulted in Beret developing a close relationship with her father, whom she perceived as a kind and gentle man.

> I think because I was more of a tomboy and because I played with my brother, I was closer to my dad too. I always remember one day – my brother was a tease, a real tease, he got a real charge out of teasing – and I can remember one time he upset my doll's carriage and the dog took the doll and ran and I couldn't catch the dog. And I was so cross; I put up such a fuss. And my dad – it was the only time I can ever remember that my dad ever said anything to us about reprimanding us – and he said,'You know, you shouldn't do that. Someday you'll think about it and you'll be sorry that you hurt your sister.' And that's the only thing I can remember that my dad ever said in the way of a reprimand.
> And I can remember my dad was such a kind, soft spoken person. And always, when he wanted us to do something, it was always a sort of game. If he wanted my brother to get up early in the morning, well he'd always go to the bottom of the stairs and maybe he'd sing a little ditty or something to wake him up.
> I think he was very sociable and very kind to people. I can remember that he was the one that – well I think he was likely established early, he was one of the pioneers. He was established early and he kept the assessment roll, and he collected the taxes, and he was a secretary-treasurer of the school board, and he was instrumental in hiring the teachers. And if people needed a little bit of money they would come and borrow money from him. He was always lending money to those who were in a bind. I can remember that; he was always helping people.

The special closeness and mutual affection Beret experienced in her relationship with her father is evidenced in the incidents she remembers.

> I can remember that I was close to my dad, because I was sort of a tomboy and he called me Tom. Of course my brother was older and so I often wore his cast-off clothing because it was, well, my mother was being thrifty. And so often I was dressed like a boy. And in those days if you were a girl you didn't go to a hairdresser to get your hair cut. Mother used to just cut my hair any old way so you couldn't tell by my hair that maybe I was a girl. And I

> can remember how, when my dad would be with a group of men visiting, I can remember so well just standing beside my dad or sitting between his legs, just to be there. I can't remember anything about the conversations or anything, but I can always remember just being there. And then I suppose at some time or other I had said to one of these men, – I don't even remember who they were or anything – that I would sure like to have a knife. And so one day that man saw my dad in town and he said, 'Here's a knife for your little boy.' So when he got home he asked my brother, 'Did you ask for a knife?' 'No!' He said, 'You didn't?' And I said, 'Well I did.' So I was the one that got the knife.
> And I can remember how I would go and would just love to sleep with him. And I'd coax and coax and every once in a while he'd finally say, well, that I could sleep with them – my mother and dad – *if* I would let him tie my feet. Because he said I always kicked. So when I'd get ready for bed he'd come and tie my feet, and I never could understand why my feet were never tied in the morning. I'd go to bed – of course I'd be asleep before they went to bed – but in the morning my feet were never tied. I never could understand till I got thinking about it after I got big and grown up, and then I realized why they were never tied. So I think about the few things that my dad did say.
> And he wasn't a great one to go out visiting or to spend any more time in town than was necessary. But I can remember that once there was a basket social at the school. I don't remember anything about it except the fact I wasn't going to school, but I remember that I wanted to have a basket and go to the basket social. And I can remember that I had said that he must buy my basket. Whatever age I was, I don't remember. But anyway I can remember the basket my mother had covered – it seemed to me it was about the size of a coat box. I can remember that he had to pay six dollars and everybody was gasping, because that was a lot of money in those days, to pay six dollars. And I can remember standing on a desk with my arm around his neck and him bidding on that basket. That was the kind of a guy he was. I can never remember him being cross or unkind in any way. No matter! And to him, I was just all right the way I was.

Not only was Beret accepted by her father the way she was, she was also important to him for the work she did to assist him.

> I helped my dad a lot too. I learned to drive an old Model T and whenever he needed repairs or anything, well then he would send me in that old Model T. And when I look back now and I think – in those days you didn't get a license or anything; if you could drive you just drove. And I can remember the first few times that I ever drove at night. Really it was quite frightening because the lights weren't very good and the roads weren't very good. And I remember how he relied on me because it took time for him to go. So whether it was repairs or if it was cement bags he needed or twine or whatever, I can remember he always sent me in that old car. I was important to him! I was useful to him and I was happy to think that I could do that. And I remember that he went to technical school and he got to be a mechanic. The old house was used for a shop and he used to do repairing. And I can remember that when the cars got ready they were to be taken back to their owners, well, that was one of my jobs. To deliver the repaired car. There was a lot of repairing in those days because it wasn't so easy to trade them in and buy a new one as it is now. So I was happy about that. And I really enjoyed it.

Unfortunately Beret's father was not a well person, and died when she was young, so she lost this very important source of support. She explains:

> And he wasn't a very strong person; he wasn't a very well person. I think my mother said that she thought that as they grew up when they were young men, that he had had lung trouble or something. Because he wasn't strong; he was very tall and very thin.
> But my father supported me, as long as he lived. Yes, he was always on my side. But he died so young. He was only 47 or 48 when he passed away. I was about 11, or was I 12? I think I was 11 or 12. And I can remember, he had dropsy and my uncle – like I guess in those days they didn't know too much what to do – and my uncle thought that he would take him somewhere to Vancouver to a better doctor. And then he died there. And my mother, what should I say? We knew they were out there and we knew he was ill and my mother said that the day before she got the news that he had passed away, like that night, she said she dreamed somebody told her that he had passed away. And she said, 'I just sat up in bed and said NO!' And she didn't have the news but the next day she got the news. And I don't know whether that was some sort of a gift she had or what, but I always remember her telling that. And well isn't that strange! Strange!
> When my father died I couldn't cry. I remember sitting in the corner and I just sat and sat. My mother could cry; my friends cried. And I think losing my father when I was that young made me strong and independent. So that I think being away from home – like I had to go away from home to go to high school – and I think that it helped me because I hadn't ever sort of depended on my mother. And so my dad was gone and I didn't have him to depend on.

Even after his death, Beret's close relationship with her father influenced her. She believes she learned from him an affection for children, which led to her decision to become a teacher and enriched her relationships with her own children and grandchildren.

> And I can remember in the later years, I can remember Dr.Calder saying, 'Well' he said, 'you always were a sucker for children anyway,' he said. Because I always enjoyed children and looking after children. And I suppose maybe that's what made me decide. I always had time for little people and babies, and I really enjoyed them. I enjoyed my own and I am really enjoying my grandchildren. We were just so lucky to have as much as we have. I think I learned that from my dad. I think from my dad, maybe because he was so affectionate to me. I think so. Because I think that I feel as though I'm a more affectionate person than my sister or my mother. I feel that I am.

Being affectionate and kind like her father appears to have another side to it, however. In answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?", Beret explains that although she hasn't felt powerless she is aware of a failing, or at least others see it as a failing, that she does not defend herself in a quarrel or in a situation which is hurtful to her. She explains how she associates this behaviour with her father, and what it means to her. Although being always kind, even at her own expense, seems to cause some difficulty, from Beret's perspective the experiencing of pain and judgment is more acceptable than risking rejection or appearing unkind.

> I haven't really felt powerless. No, not powerless! But I have maybe – maybe it's a failing or I feel within me that no quarrel with a person is ever worthwhile. And my family think, 'Why don't you say such and such when she says that? Why don't you defend yourself? Why do you let her get away with that?' But I just feel, 'It's not worth it.' So whether it's good or bad, I feel that I'm happy doing it that way. I don't mind that. If there is abuse I don't mind it, because I think that I'm ahead anyway. Someone maybe says something that is very cutting or very unnecessary, and I don't say anything. And I could have, but I just feel I'd rather not. So that there's never a situation where I have ever – there's never anybody that I would be afraid to face because of something that I have said or something I have done. It's kind of a thing of my own. Maybe it's unnatural, I don't know. But that's part of me. I don't want to say or do something that I might have been sorry for. And I'm happy about it later. It seems like the one thing in my life that I have always guarded against. I don't know why. And, so it doesn't matter whether it's intentional or unintentional or somebody does it maybe in jest or if it hurts me, I still don't retaliate. But I'm always happy about it after, as a rule. I think sometimes, 'Well, I should have said, or I should have done,' but then I think of farther ahead, when I think about it for awhile. Those feelings finally disappear, finally disappear. I carry them around for a little while. For a while, yeah. But then after awhile they disappear. I think I got that from my dad, because he was that kind of a person. I never heard him say a thing ever to anybody in any situation, whether it was well, anything – even in any conversation or any dealing or anything. I think it went right back to, 'You'll be sorry someday if you said that.' I can't think of anything else off hand. It seems like I can't think of any situations that I can't cope with. But I know that that's a failing. That's one of the things that always happens to me, I mean this never to retaliate. I think other people see it as a failing because my own children say, 'Why didn't you say something? Why do you let her do that?' But I'd rather have it that way and then I don't have any regrets about it after. So if somebody does say something to me that does hurt, I never say anything. I think afterwards, 'Well I could have said, but I'm glad I didn't say it.'

The fear of being judged as unkind is strong enough to inhibit Beret's behavior. However, the fear of being judged as unfeminine in her actions has not deterred Beret from working 'like a man'. In fact she values that she likes and is capable of doing farm work and appreciates the skills she learned as a 'tomboy'. In answer to the question, 'What do you value about yourself?' Beret responds:

> And I think that maybe something that I think is all right with myself is that I don't mind working. I like to work, I like to do something – it doesn't matter what it is, I enjoy doing it. I hauled grain for Peter and I enjoyed doing that. I didn't think it was a hardship. I was happy that I was able to do it, *could* do it. I just think my life has been enriched by every experience that I've had. And everything, even if it wasn't feminine to do it, I think it has added to the pleasures of my life. I just feel like so many things I have done, maybe because I am an outdoor person or because of I'm sort of a tomboy – the satisfaction I've had because I was able to do it. And that I've been useful because I've been able to do it. I think about some people, or maybe some women I suppose, think it's unbecoming doing certain things because you're a woman. But I've had such satisfaction out of doing it, because I was *able* to do it. That's really added something to my life! Those years that I drove – I think I was 12 when I started to drive that old car – and I think how useful I could be, and that I could be trusted, and how I've driven to school all these years. I don't know how many miles I would have made in all the years that I taught and drove to school and through the snowstorms and the blizzards. And it was very satisfying! I think that I wouldn't want to be somebody who hadn't done that, because I think that it has been rewarding to me and satisfying to me.

> And I think I'm lucky that I can drive a car and have got all my faculties so that I can, and the courage to get out and drive. And I think that comes from driving a lot. I think that I would feel handicapped and maybe confined, if I couldn't do that, that could just hamper my lifestyle and the things that I enjoy.

Also valued is the peace and privacy of farm life and the fact of having lived on the same family farm for her entire life.

> I value things that I'm happy about. I'm happy about where I live: I'm happy to be in the country, and I'm happy to be in this community because I enjoy all these people. I like quiet – quiet and peaceful. I don't like the noise of the city. I like the privacy. I like to be able to walk outside and walk in the trees. I like nature. I like to walk and I like to see the birds and I like to see the trees and animals. And I suppose maybe because I've always lived here, that I'd hate to think that somebody else was going to live here. I hope that somehow maybe all this piece of land will always stay in the family. So I like that. I'm happy about that.

In conjunction with this, Beret values the freedom that her parents sought as immigrants and which she now experiences, living in Canada.

> I think that I feel lucky that we live in Canada and in Alberta. And I can remember saying to my dad at one time, I said, 'How did you ever decide that this is where you would come to live?' Well, in the first place there were three sons in the family and jobs were few over there, and it was the thing to get over to America. And then his uncle, that uncle came first to Chicago, and then these three brothers came. And then he met my mother and they married and about that time the homesteads opened up. And then he said, 'When we thought about it quite a bit and they said there were no tornadoes, and no poisonous snakes, we thought that was it!' And you know, I just never ever thought that we'd have tornadoes either, but you know we did have a tornado here, not too many years ago. And what else did they think about? My mother, she thought that because my dad wasn't a real strong person, she thought that farm life, out in the country, would be good for him. He worked for a machine company when they were in Chicago. But I'm thankful that we live here. I feel very relaxed, and I feel as though we're lucky to have the freedom that we have, when I think about a lot of other countries. And our population isn't so dense. I think we're lucky that way, so far.

We have already seen that the kind of freedom Beret was given by her parents, the skills they taught her, and the independence and self-determination they encouraged were basic to her development. The acceptance and belonging she experienced with her friends and community also seems important. As she describes the good times she experienced going to dances with her brother and friends, the feelings of acceptance and belonging become apparent.

> I can't remember that my dad ever danced that I remember of, and I can't remember my mother ever going to a dance or anything. But I knew my mother could dance because I can remember that she would show my brother and I the cakewalk and I forget some of these dances that they had done away back in the early days. So the school house dances was where I started to dance, they used to have dances in the school house. I suppose that's where we got started, and then we were so close by. We would just go, but my sister never went. And I can remember, well, when you say the heel and toe polka, I remember that's the first dance that we learned when we went to those school house dances. And then those other girls, their families

went to some of these barn dances and we used to go to barn dances and we'd dance. And my mother never worried about me when I went with someone else. We just went with a group, you know. Then when I got to be a pretty good dancer, well then my oldest brother, he liked dancing, and so then we would go to house parties and we'd dance. My brother and I we were really – I went with him a lot because he liked to dance and I could dance and I liked to dance. So we did a lot of dancing. At first, I don't think I had any boyfriends and whoever I went with, it seemed like somebody that was always a good dancer. And we had such good times. The girls that I chummed with, we'd go to dances. And I can remember if it was that we didn't like to – well, we always had a dance card. In those days we used to have a list of people, so we had dances ahead. Now it's just something you never hear about even anymore. But I enjoyed the dancing is what I enjoyed, to begin with. It wasn't the company, it was the dancing that I enjoyed.

Further, a sense of adventure and the confidence to do as she pleased is evident in Beret's stories of her escapades with her girlfriends.

And then I can remember some escapades. Well! This girl that I chummed with, her parents, they didn't want her to go out with this boy. It was all right if she went out with him as long as we were together, but if we were going to go somewhere and he was going to be her escort, it was fine if I was along. But then sometimes they would want to go maybe to a show or something where we didn't want to go. So we had to have a plan. So the plan was – and the door had to be locked when the last one went in – so if I went in first, well then I would just put a piece of firewood on the step and then she would know that I was in, and she would be the one to lock the door. I was staying with her; I was living with her folks – it was her folks that didn't approve of this guy she was going with. So then the other way around: if she was in first, well then the firewood was on the steps and then I locked the door. But anyway, this one night it was, the firewood was on the steps and so I thought she was in and I locked the door. And she came afterwards and she couldn't get in. She didn't know what to do. She didn't want to knock on the door and let her parents know that it was this late and that I was in. So there was an old woodshed out there, and there was some old junk in there and anyways she slept out in the woodshed. So we had some explaining to do that day. And sometimes, if somebody came and called for us that we didn't really want to have a date with – in those old houses, well the back door was there and the front door was hidden in the front room – and we would quietly slip out the front door so that her mother could say that we weren't home. And what else did we do? Oh yes. They called us the three rascals because we always chummed together. And one day this lady, teaching out at a country school just a little ways out of town, she said, 'We're having a basket social tonight and would you come to the basket social?' So we got three big sort of bandannas and three paper bags and went out and cut three willow sticks. And we put lunch in these bags. And we were able to get the car, the old Ford Touring, from this girl's dad; he said he would let us have his car. So we went out to the basket social. He trusted me; if I drove we could have the car. And so we went to the basket social with three of those tramp deals. And the other two girls each got a nice young guy to have their lunch with. And I got somebody – I don't know if he was an old bachelor, I don't even remember who he was. But anyway, we had our lunch and then sometimes that was it. There was no dance or anything; it was just a social. It was to raise money I suppose or something for the school. So we all liked this one fellow. These two guys had come on horseback and they both wanted to ride home with us and come back to town with us and leave their horses. I don't know what they had planned to do with their horses. But anyway, we talked it over and we decided we were going to take this one guy that we liked, but we weren't going to take the other one. And so we planned that as soon as we got in the car, I was going to start to drive and they were going to push him off and leave him behind. And that's just what we did! Pushed him off and left him

behind. We took the other guy and went back to town.

Indicative of her confidence and sense of pride is Beret's quick rejection of a boyfriend's family's criticism of her, along with rejection of the boyfriend.

> I finally started to get attracted to different people and I started to go with this one guy. I went with him for a long time and then I discovered through the grapevine that his family just thought I was a nothing. They didn't know why he wanted to have anything to do with me. And I thought, 'Okay for you. I wouldn't marry into that family for anything.' And that was that!

To Beret, having a boyfriend meant having good company and having fun. Circumstances of the time required that the fun take place in groups, and again, Beret and her girlfriends were actively involved.

> And then, our family used to play softball in the summer evenings, like during the summer holidays. We used to play across there in the pasture with everybody. And it got so that we had such a good girl's softball team, and all summer we'd go to a picnic there or sports day there. And times were hard so the people didn't each have a car or something like this. And so there was a fellow in the neighbourhood that did trucking – that was the way he made a living. So he would drive us, if we paid for gas. We'd all load up in this truck and go. And then any of the boys in the neighbourhood, well they would come along and they would be our cheering section. And so then we got reacquainted with the people in the neighbourhood. And Peter used to live just over there, and so that's how I got acquainted with him. He used to come to the ballgames and the ball practices and go with us. And then of course very few people had cars – like young people didn't have cars. They were hard times and they just didn't have it, and if you had two-bits or something to go to a dance, well you were lucky that you had that money. And I can remember that there was a hired man working for somebody just south of here, and he had acquired a second hand car, and so they would sort of coax him to come and pick up a bunch and we would go to a dance up here at this country hall or that country hall. And that poor guy, we didn't have yard lights in those days, and he never knew how many he had in his car. We just all of us that wanted to go, we'd gather some place and we'd just all get in. One time we were unloading up at the hall up there, and when he saw how many people got out of his car – it was a great big old touring car – he said, 'That's just too hard on the car! All those people in that car!' But we had fun. And then in the winter time we'd go with bob sleds. Quite often there were country dances or school house dances. There used to be quite a few dances over here at the school – it was just right over there (pointing), so we'd go to the school dances. So having a boyfriend meant just having fun, I think, and going to dances. Having good company.

At age 68, Beret perceives the years of her life as having gone by quickly.

> The only thing now of wanting to talk about something that you resent – those years went so fast. They went so fast! They were enjoyable, but how quickly they went! And I suppose it was because you just were so busy every day doing everything that had to be done, and it just went by so quickly. And I can say that a person should – I didn't do it because I didn't know enough to do it I guess, or was too busy to, but I think you should write down all these things that they say and that they do, because you're not going to remember them. And there's just so few things that I can remember. I want to write them down now, what I do remember.

She cherishes her memories from the past, as is evidenced by her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> Well, I think those are the things I value most. And my memories. I've got all the good memories and the things that have happened, the experiences that I've had. And I think that things have happened to people in my generation that will never happen to anybody from now on. And my next project is going to be that I'm going to record all these things and have them printed for my grandchildren, so that it won't be entirely lost – experiences that I have had and things that I know about, what my mother did, experiences she had. One thing that I think about, about my dad – I suppose I didn't clue in, I was little then. But I can remember he said, 'You know, when I was little,' he said, 'they sewed my clothes on me.' He said, 'They sewed my clothes on me.' And I suppose I imagined that they sewed them right to him, you know, and I can remember how sorry I felt for him that he had to have his clothes sewed on him. And I have questioned Peter's aunt and uncle, and he's 86. And she has told me about their childhood and what it was like. And I'm going to put this all together. And Peter's grandmother – the year she came Peter's mother died, so that grandmother, she sort of took over the household for awhile. Peter's mother died and he was the oldest and he was six, and so of course he wouldn't remember too much. But the grandmother had enough foresight that she just had taken a piece of paper out of an old scribbler and she had written down the names of Peter's parents. They had four children before Peter came, and each one of those died. And she wrote it down; otherwise we would never have known. Like, 'So-and-so,'and it had a name, 'born such and such, died the same day.' And each one of these children were born. Imagine what those people went through having four children before they had one that lived! Imagine!

While many of her memories are personal anecdotes, Beret also recognizes that valuable knowledge and historical information has already been lost with the passing of her parents' and her own generation. In answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?" she states:

> I just think that it's too bad that all these people that are growing old that have got such a vast knowledge through the experiences that they had, that they're not being made use of. It's too bad that they know so much and maybe they have so many skills and so much knowledge that they could pass on to others – knowledge that they have gotten through experiences that they have had, that can't be passed on, that isn't being passed on. I sometimes think about it and think, 'It's such a waste!' And sometimes I think of those things, like about Peter telling of the years that they've spent in the fields, and things that they've learned about, say, wild animals for instance. One thing that I've never read in any book – Peter said, 'You know that when a rabbit has young it never has them all in one place. It has them scattered.' He said, 'You'll see that mother go and feed that one, and then she'll go and feed that one, and then she'll go and feed that one.' And I suppose if they were all together, if a coyote came and got one, he'd get all of them. And I never ever read that in a book. And I'm sure that lots of these people – I'll bet even trappers have learned things that haven't been written anywhere. And now I think about too, like people, like lots of retired farmers that I know, I'll bet they've learned things about their farming and their methods and things that really would be valuable to a younger generation, if it should be passed on. I just think that we're losing all that valuable knowledge. But I can't think of many things, or anything, that I resent.

However, still active and believing in her capabilities, Beret has completed an historical account of her community and is in the planning stage for her second book.

> And all these stories I hope to gather. I think that it seems now that people are starting to realize that a lot of those things are going to be lost. They are thinking that they are valuable. And since we did this book now, I know that there are so many stories, really good stories, that they never got in because people didn't bother to tell them. But just in this area, like where we collected the stories of the people, the ones that did come forward with stories were really something. To think that people withstood such hardships and those tragedies, and did all these things. And there's a lot of humor in it too; it isn't all just sadness and tragedy. Cooperation in the community and the caring in the community. It's just amazing! I thought maybe I would do it this winter.

Asked, "What do you think about this saying 'It's a man's world'?" Beret focused on the idea that women play an important role which hasn't been recognized.

> Well I think that it's antiquated now, don't you think so? Especially in this day – well, I don't think it's ever been a man's world. How about the important role that women have always played in life? And unless they mean by 'it's a man's world,' that it was man-dominated, I don't know. But I think that women are really, well, they've always contributed a lot and they're contributing more every generation, to every way in life: to the health and the politics and world situations and situations in the communities. I think they've always been in there, but they haven't been recognized. And I think too that they're doing more too as the years go on.

Asked, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?", Beret explained she takes what she calls a middle of the road stance – it is good to recognize women but extreme to reject men.

> Well I think sometimes there are extremists, but I think sort of a middle road is good. I think that the women should be recognized for all that they are accomplishing and the goals that they have set, but I think that it always seems to be a few or one or two or some that sort of want to go to the extreme. And I think that they put the rest of them in a bad light – those that advocate things that are sort of extreme. I can't think of anything specific. Well from some of these leaders or some of these groups, I think that they leave me with the impression that we can get along very well without – all the jobs could be manned by women pretty well, and we really could get along pretty well just without the men. And I don't think that anybody should try to leave that impression.

C. Sally

Sally is a 23 year old woman of Metis origin, born and living in a small community in Northern Alberta. Her mother is a homemaker with a grade three education. Her father is a trapper with no formal education. Sally was the eldest of four children in her family. She was married at age 15, widowed at age 18, and presently lives alone with her eight year old daughter. Sally has a grade eight education and in addition to working as a full time homemaker and caretaker of her daughter has fished commercially with her father. For the past six years Sally has worked part-time as a paid homemaker living on an income of $300 monthly in addition to a $165 per month widow's pension. Just prior to the interview her job became full-time and her new salary will be $795 per month. In her community Sally sits on an advisory board of a family services program.

In answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" Sally first talks about being a mother and the difficulty of her life so far. That these two issues are of central importance is not surprising when we learn that Sally became a mother at age 15.

> Well, as far as I've gotten - you know I've not gotten very far - being a woman has meant being a mother, so far. To me that means raising our child on my own, because I have to do it. This means being with my daughter, spending as much time as I can with her and trying to talk to her now about the facts of life, because she is eight years old and she's very mature for her age, which is making it a whole lot harder for me. Making sure she goes to school and that I am there when she needs me. Protect her and hoping that she doesn't go through the same things that I had to go through. Like when I had her I was only 15. It wasn't a very good experience. It was hard.

Sally explained the circumstances leading up to her pregnancy. A victim of sexual harassment by one of her grade 8 teachers, she received no support from the school authorities when she approached them. Consequently she left school and this resulted in her expulsion.

> I was expelled from school when I was in grade eight. My mother wouldn't let me go back because I was having trouble with one of the teachers. He was always trying to push himself on me and all that so I left. He was just getting too close and touching me too much. When I'd be doing my work, I'd look up and there he'd be looking at me. I just felt awful. I had long talks with my friends about it and went to the office and talked to the principal about it. I was into the principal's office quite a few times to report him. But here I was just a little girl, and he was married and had been a teacher for how many years. They wanted me to ignore all this, which I couldn't do. One day I couldn't take it anymore so I just grabbed my books and threw them across the floor. And I told the principal I wasn't going to go back to my science class if I had to have him as a teacher. I said I'd do my science in the library. Like the principal had me in his office talking about it and then he talked to the teacher. I didn't want to back to school cause I didn't want to be

> near that teacher. So they let me do that for awhile but then after they said I had to back in class. And I refused to go. So they just said that I couldn't go back to school. So the principal came out to see my parents and they didn't want me to go back to school either, after all that had happened. So that was it! I had wanted to finish school but that stopped it. Sometimes I think about it now. I wonder if that hadn't happened if I'd have finished my schooling.

Soon afterward she started dating. Her mother's reaction to this was to warn her about sex but give her no information about it. Sally resented her mother's attitude, got sexually involved with her boyfriend, and consequently got pregnant.

> Then I started dating and going out and then my mother always told me, 'Never have sex, never have sex,' but she never gave the reason why. She always said that just as soon as I started going out, but she never explained anything to me about sex or anything. She was allowing me to go out and all that, but all she ever said was, 'Don't go to sleep with a guy'. That was it! She never really explained the reasons or anything.
> When I started dating she said a lot of men try to use women. Like she used to tell me, 'Don't do it because it's not worth it.' She didn't tell me enough and I was too scared to ask because I was afraid if I asked too many questions she might get mad. She was my mother; she should have known what to tell me, but she never did. When I had my first period I didn't know anything about it until it happened. She never talked to me about it. I felt scared and lost and alone. I had heard about what was coming from the kids and a cousin. But I was kind of scared to tell my mom. And then after she found out she changed – like, I wasn't her little girl anymore. Then after that it was – like I guess in her eyes she seen me as grown up and being a woman. And I just noticed a change in her – like she was kind of distant from me. Why, I don't know! After I started them she did seem different towards me, like she was scared or something. She didn't like the idea I had started them. I was 13 then. Like, I used to go out with friends and that's when I noticed it. Everytime I was going somewhere she was always worried. That's when the lectures started. I don't know what happened – whether I was tired of listening to her, or if I didn't care anymore.
> I remember the night I went out and did it, and I wasn't in a very good mood. I was still kind of upset with my mother. I don't know if it's because of that or because of the school too – that I couldn't go back to school. I don't know the reason I done it, if it was because she told me not to, or I just felt like doing everything. So I got pregnant and that was that.

Sally relates her feelings about being pregnant and her parent's reactions when they found out.

> When I first found out I was pregnant I was really, really scared, eh, because I was wondering what my parents would say to me. And I felt alone, because I thought that my boyfriend didn't really care. So one day Mom and I had an argument – she broke a broom over my back, I believe it was – and I out and out told her I was pregnant. She didn't believe me. And I kept insisting that I was, so finally she got dad to bring her right into town to the clinic. And she went right into the clinic and asked the doctor and the doctor said, 'Yes, it was true.' So she came home and she didn't talk to me for a few days. Dad was a little bit upset with me. And it really made me feel bad because they weren't saying anything. I'd rather they'd yell at me or whatever so I'd know exactly what was going on. So anyways one night my boyfriend came to pick me up and Dad got him in the house and sat and talked for awhile and Dad says, 'If you don't marry her, I'll shoot you!' So this made things seem just really, really terrible, eh. I ended up not going out that night and then I guess that we both felt pressured that we *had* to get married. We had at this point already decided that we wanted to, but after that we felt like we *had* to. It was pretty hard.

Sally experienced support at this time from an uncle and aunt who offered her alternatives. She describes her reasons for deciding to get married.

> My uncle and aunt came in from Edmonton – I really think the world of them and have a lot of respect for them. This aunty – like my dad's sister – like I used to spend a month every summer with them in Edmonton, so once they found out what happened they came up from the city to talk to me. And they gave me different choices, like having an abortion or having the baby and raising it on my own and they'd give me their support, or else getting married and they'd help us with a home. I had already thought that I wanted the baby, but I didn't really know what it would be like because I knew I wasn't ready to be a mother. But then I couldn't really see myself having an abortion or giving up the baby either. I thought it was my responsibility. I also felt that if I did get married and have the baby it would take me away from home. And I wanted to get away from home. So anyways we were excited to get married.

However, the marriage went badly from the start.

> So I got married and had the baby and my marriage was nothing but trouble because we were both young. He wasn't really ready to settle down and so he used to go out and come home at three or four in the morning. Well, right from the time we got married, like I don't think there was ever much of a marriage, because he was hardly ever at home. He was working in McMurray and he was gone for the week and home on weekends. And when he did come home on the weekends he'd be gone out drinking and leaving me behind, and we'd never be doing things together. And there was a lot of times he'd be accusing me of doing things, and there was nothing I'd ever done. So it was just hell! It really made me feel bad and it made me hurt, and yet I didn't want to let go because I thought it was a marriage and that we should try to make it work. Marriage to me, was, like I thought marriage was supposed to be a solid thing. Like I was going to give it a try and I put everything I had into it.
> And the main thing is, like I thought a marriage was supposed to be something shared and not all one-sided. And I didn't feel secure with my husband; I didn't feel loved with my husband. He used to go out drinking and take girls over to his mom's and that used to bother me. He hurt me. Even to this day sometimes when I think about it, I don't feel very good about it. But I try to block it out of my mind. Sometimes I guess maybe I felt like I was being used. And sometimes I figured, 'Well, maybe it was my fault. Why did I get married?' And sometimes I blamed him too. If he wasn't ready for marriage, why didn't he say so to begin with?

Eventually Sally decided that her commitment alone could not make the marriage work and she decided to sue for divorce. She describes her feelings and the conflicts she experienced prior to making this decision.

> But then after that I realized that it had to be the both of us that wanted it to work, and not just myself. And I could see that I was getting nowhere because he would never take the time to talk to me or be with me. So finally I gave up. It got to the point that when he did come home that – like he'd be out all hours of the night and he'd come home and expect to have sex from me – and it got to the point where I felt like I hated him, like that's the feeling I got. I didn't want to see him; I didn't want him to touch me; I didn't even want to be under the same roof with him. So this is why I went to file for a divorce. But when I did that I felt very much alone. I felt like I was more alone in this world than when I was pregnant and afraid to tell my parents. I had the baby then – I think she was one and a half or two years old. But when I filed for divorce, I wanted to have the baby with me too. Getting the

> divorce meant that I would be alone and have the chance to raise my daughter the way I wanted; that I wouldn't have to live with him and live that kind of life.
> See, like another main reason why I didn't want my marriage to go on any further was, like my little girl, she was just starting to talk and this and that, and he tried his best to turn her against me. He'd get her to swear at me and tell her to call me names and just like sort of stay away from me. I already found it really hard to be close to her when he was gone away to work and I had her for that week. She seemed to respond to me and yet it seemed that she just wasn't there. And even at that age, when her father came home her attitude was all different. She'd scream and yell and she wouldn't listen to me, and things like what I thought she knew and what I expected of her she should be doing, everything would be the opposite. And she'd scream for things which she knew she couldn't have, but she'd get them when her father was there. At that point I was getting that I felt like I didn't care for her at times when we were alone, because of what she was doing to me when she was with her father. And that started to bother me quite a bit too, because I started feeling guilty – 'Well, I went through this, I wanted to have this baby, why am I feeling this way? Just because her father is doing all this to me, I shouldn't be taking it out on her.' But then it would just really upset me when he would be there and she'd do these things that she knew she shouldn't be doing. And he made me feel like he wanted her to hate me or dislike me. He didn't want me to have any part of her. I used to feel sad because I felt he wasn't giving me a chance to love my own daughter. Like he wanted his little girl to see her mother as being no good. So it got to the point at times where I just didn't care for her and I thought about this – it crossed my mind a few times – then I figured I had to *do* something or else I'd grow up in a living situation like this and end up not liking my own child. And I found this very hard to do because I thought, 'Well, why should I do this if that's what you think of me? After all, I am your mother.' But then it's a good thing I done a lot of thinking, because like I realized that she was just a little kid, and she really didn't know what she was doing. And naturally she was going to want to be getting her way, because that's what made her happy. So I wanted the divorce to keep my relationship with my daughter, as well as keep my own sanity. Like, it wouldn't have made me feel good to say 'Oh, that's my daughter,' and seen her grown up to be rude.
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> See, like now she's eight years old and I still have problems with her. And I'm pretty sure she remembers stuff that used to go on. There was times when he'd come home and he'd give me a licking and there'd be blood flying all over the place. And she'd wake up screaming and you know, she's seen her father put his boots and fists to me. And then I'd cry and I'd be in a corner by myself anywhere, and he'd go and pick her up and comfort her, eh. So it was really, really bad!

Sally left her husband and got a job away from home. However, when she returned there was pressure from her parents and husband to go back to the marriage. Sally describes what happened and the reasons she had for trying again to make the marriage work – reasons involving the change she saw in her husband and the hope that he could help change her relationship with her daughter.

> When we were going through our separation I got a job. I started working for a social service agency and I told my supervisor that I wanted to be out on a job so that nobody would know where I was. So she put me out of town babysitting. And she didn't tell anybody where I was. But I guess my husband was in there and finally my parents went in there because they didn't know where I was either. And there was a couple of doctors that were talking to her and trying to find my whereabouts too, I guess, because my husband was having such a hard time. Because it was really bothering him.

> Well, I finally got back into town. He didn't find me. I can't remember if my job was finished or what, but I came back into town. My parents finally found me because they told my supervisor they were going to go to the cops if they couldn't find me because they were getting pretty worried. Because they'd kept my baby for me, and my husband had went and picked up the baby and wouldn't take it back. So, like when I filed for divorce my dad says, 'Fine, if that's what you want, go ahead. But I don't want you to ever be back with him again.' Then when I came back to town I seen my dad. What does my dad do? He tells me, 'Well, maybe you should give him one more chance.' Like he tells me, 'You wouldn't believe the things he's being doing – like he's really made an effort to change.' He'd been so upset and bothered because I had left. I told my father, 'Yeah, you believe him? He's probably just putting on a show for you people.' And my dad, like he didn't have any respect for the guy, he didn't care for him at all, and he told me to give him another chance. So this is why I went ahead and tried it again. Cause my dad wanted me to. And yet my dad couldn't stand the guy. So like I had a long talk with him. Like my dad picked me up and we went and had dinner at the hotel. I was nervous. I was scared because I was afraid then that he'd probably beat me up for running away – that was always a fear I had to carry within me. But I could see that he was very nervous too, and I had never seen him that way before. And he actually cried and asked me if I'd go back and if I'd give him a second chance. And he promised me he'd never do the things to me he used to do. So I thought about it for awhile, and then I thought, 'Well, maybe I'll give him another chance.' Because he said he was gonna – like we were both gonna be parents to Rebecca instead of having it all be one side. So I thought, 'Well, if he's gonna change and be good to me, it'd be worth a try. And then maybe, like the things he said to Rebecca, if she sees that he's trying to be nice to me and respect my wishes or whatever we decide together, then maybe it would be easier for her to accept me as her mother and not some dirty thing that she already had me to be in her mind.' So I went along and I says 'Okay! One more chance!'

Getting back together after the threat of divorce turned out to be positive. Sally's husband changed his behaviour and attitude, although Sally never did get over the fear that he would revert to his old ways.

> After we got back together there was a really, really difference. He was kind to me; he never once beat me up after that. And like he used to still baby Rebecca, but he never got Rebecca to swear at me and destroy things for no reason, around the home. There was times when she'd be doing something that she shouldn't be, and he'd tell her not to do it. And there was a change just in that he seemed to care for me. His attitude was just different. So like I felt that things were going okay. But I still didn't feel good because of all that had happened in the past – it wasn't something that I could just forget. And then I was always thinking, 'Well, how long is it going to be this way?' I never got over that feeling. But towards the end there were times when I was pretty happy, and happy with the way things were going. But there was always doubt there. I kept wondering, 'When is he gonna blow off the handle? When is he gonna hit me again? When was he gonna go drinking? When is he gonna take out other women?' So in a way I was never really, really relaxed; I was always tense. Because of the way things were before and the way he was then – there was just such a difference that it was a little hard for me to accept. It was September I had filed for a divorce and the end of October we were back together again. Things were finally working out for us. When I look back I'm glad I filed for the divorce, because if I hadn't have done that we probably wouldn't have had any good times at all. He didn't listen to me until I did that. After that he used to come home at nights and it was nice.

Whether or not the positive changes Sally perceived in her husband were permanent,

she will never know. He was tragically killed in a highway accident just a few weeks after they were reunited. She describes what happened.

> Then it was December when we went into the city to do Christmas shopping. It was the first time we had done any kind of shopping together. I had my parents with me. I don't remember how many nights we had stayed – one night or two nights. It was on a Sunday I think it was, when we was coming back home – I don't remember now. He was in a really good mood and we had a really good weekend. We both enjoyed ourselves; we were happy. And then – oh, the car we were using was my car he had bought me for a Christmas present to go to work, so we had taken it the city to see how it worked. It was running good. But then there was this farm truck that cut us off – it turned right in front of us just when we were ready to pass. And we ended up in the ditch. Everybody was okay, nobody was hurt. And the farmer there says, 'Well I put the signal light on and they still went ahead and passed us.' So the police went over and checked this big old farm truck and there wasn't no wires, just signal lights, tail lights, so therefore he was lying. So they pulled our car out of the ditch with a tractor. And they had to hook something to the front fenders and pull the fenders away from the wheels, the tires, so we could get going. And they took down all the stories and then the police says it was okay, we could continue home. So we went. And then just a little ways past the car just backfired and stopped on us. So we got right over onto the shoulder and stayed there for quite awhile. This was about six, seven in the evening. And a few people tried to stop and help us but there was not much we could do. And we were thinking that we got such a jar from hitting that truck so hard that something happened – because the car wasn't new, it was a used car. So we stayed there and my husband was outside trying to flag people down to get us a ride and there was this truck stopped right ahead of us – he was going to give us a ride. And then my husband was just running over to the car, and he had his hand on the driver's side of the door, ready to open it. And the next thing I knew there was a bang in the back of the car and a vehicle just coming and scraping along side of the car and my husband was gone. He was dragged into a ditch by the car and pulled back out, and he was hit against another vehicle. And then the car hit this other guy that was going to help us, and he dragged the both of them a long ways and finally the both of them fell off the truck. The guy didn't slow down or anything. And this other guy that he killed was his best friend. But I don't really remember what happened. It was kind of fuzzy, eh. I remember I was in the ditch and I remember at one point, I remember this yellow car – there was a bunch of young kids and they were drinking or something, and they turned right in front of me, cause I had been outside, eh. Just about ran over me! Didn't even try to turn the other way! And I was gonna ride with this old guy – he had a bunch of groceries. And I think I was throwing some stuff out of his truck. And he kept on saying crazy things to me. Then, after that I don't remember anything – I woke up in the hospital. So I guess I went into shock or something, cause I seen his body and it was a mess.
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> See, what made it so hard is because like we had gotten along fairly well. And that first accident after my car was all mucked up, well I was really scared cause I figured, you know, the way he was, that he'd really, really be mad. But he says, 'That's okay, don't worry about it, it's only a car. There's lots of other cars around.' It was just the way he said it – he didn't say he was gonna buy me another one. He said, 'There's a lot of other cars around.' It was just as though he expected something to happen. Cause it didn't bother him at all. And like the way he was before he probably would have turned around and hit that guy or something, that run into us. But it didn't bother him at all. He was a real different person that day. Even my parents realized it. So that was right before Christmas. He was killed in December of 1975 so that was 5 years ago.

Sally's adjustment to her husband's sudden death took some time. She describes the

various feelings she experienced: pain regarding the tragic death of such a vigorous young man, forgiveness for the way he had abused her, determination to survive on her own, concern for her daughter, and the fear of her husband haunting them in their sleep.

> Christmas Eve I came to. I was in the hospital. Like I could sort of see what was going on but it was black in my mind, eh, like it wasn't true. I realized I was in the hospital and I got up and left. I think I went to my mother's – my girl was there and the Christmas tree was up and it was just awful, eh. I took my girl and went over to my in-laws. And I just couldn't stand it there. I wanted to come home. But I think in the back of my mind I always wanted to go home because I expected my husband to be there. So there was my sister-in-law and some other people finally took me home to the trailer, and I get in – and you see, that was the first Christmas tree we had ever decorated together, and it was still sitting there. I got to the trailer still expecting him to be home, I guess. And I walked right to the end, and that's when it finally dawned on me that he was dead. Like I really, really felt down, because I thought, 'Why did he have to go this way?' Like it could have probably been easier for me to accept if it had been through illness. And like he was young and he enjoyed his living. And like I didn't really blame him for treating me the way he did, because he wasn't ready to be settled down. And it was hard to accept for a long time. But then I kept thinking, 'Well, I've got my girl to think about; I've got to do the best I can for her.' And I thought, 'I wanted to be alone, so this is my chance.'
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> For the longest time after that my little girl used to get up screaming and crying at night, saying that man was laughing at her and was after her, the guy with all the make-up on his face. Because when we had the funeral and that, she seen his body in the casket. And it was just a mess! It didn't even look like him. His face was really, really puffed and it was just loaded with make-up. She didn't know that was her father. But yet everytime she'd wake up or she'd talk to me, she'd say he was laughing at her. And the one night I had to take her and put her in my bed, and her eyes were just wide, wide open and she was shaking and she was staring. She just stared at the ceiling and she couldn't blink her eyes. It just about flipped me out – I was so scared! I just felt like, 'What's he trying to do to us now? He's wrecked our lives when we were together. Is he still going to be trying to interfere with our lives?' Because I used to have nightmares about him, too. Usually I'd have these nightmares when I'd be laying on my stomach, or in a position where I couldn't see him but he'd come over my back and he'd tickle the hell out of me. And he'd stand back and laugh at me. And one of his hands – the hand he'd always tickle me with – is the one where he had some fingers missing. And he'd rub this hand on me. Like I'd just wake up shivering lots of times. And it was a bad experience! But I don't know if I had those nightmares because it bothered me to see him, the way he was, or just exactly what, eh. I haven't had them for a long time. And the last one my girl had was that one there where she couldn't open up her eyes. Because she started screaming that night, and the funny thing is she scared me. I thought, 'Oh my God! What's happened to her?' So I started screaming because I was half asleep. My girl's got a dark complexion, but that night she was pretty pale.

Being a single parent was especially hard for Sally because her relationship with her daughter had earlier been jeopardized by her husband's behaviour – his exclusion and denigrating of her mothering role, and his violence toward her that the daughter had witnessed. The effect on Sally was devastating. She felt unloved by and unable to love her daughter, which in turn made her feel sometimes hopeless and sometimes angry or blaming.

> It wasn't until after he was gone that I really got my chance with my daughter. I really wasn't that close to my girl until after he died. I just didn't know how to deal with it. It took me a long time to love my little kid – my own child – to get to know her and feel like I was close to her. A lot of times when I'd go to hug her, she just wouldn't want me. It really made me feel bad. There were times when I felt like I couldn't keep going. After she lost her father, there was just her and I – she was the only child. The last few weeks before he died it was okay, but when he wanted to go visit his mom or something, he'd take her. They spent a lot of time together. The only times I spent with her was in the evening, giving her baths. It took a long time for us to get along.
> Then I really had a hard time at home too, because even after he was gone, like when she wouldn't listen to me I thought, like it would just flash through my mind, 'You're just like your father.' Or else, 'If it wasn't for your father you wouldn't have that way of thinking' or something. So I think there's a lot of time like I blamed her for – I don't know how to explain it – like sometimes I used to blame her for being the way she was, because she wasn't listening to me or she wasn't letting me be her mother.

Sally's difficulties as a single parent multiplied when her daughter started school and experienced difficulty there. She felt a lack of support from the teacher and school psychologist, and believed they blamed her for her daughter's problems.

> And like when she started play school or kindergarten, the teachers had a hard time with her. And I had a psychologist come in to see her. When she was going to play school she wouldn't listen to me and she'd fight with the teachers and when I came to take her home, she'd get real mad. I'm sure that they thought I was mistreating her or something. See like after when she started kindergarten, like she always wanted to be alone; she didn't want to play with other kids. And even at home, she didn't want to have her friends over. And there was no way she'd listen to her teacher. Her teacher would tell her something and she'd do the opposite. She'd lock herself in the bathroom; she'd fight with her teacher if things weren't going her way. She wanted to be the boss of herself and nobody but nobody was supposed to be able to tell her what to do. There was times, like I went to school and I talked to the psychologist and to the teacher and I told them my side of the story. And they looked at me and they kind of figured I was crazy, like it was impossible. Like I filled them in on some of the details of how she had her life before her father died, eh. And I believed that they didn't believe me. Then it made me feel really bad, like 'Yes, it's all my fault that she is this way' and it seemed to me that nobody really realized just how hard I was trying to win her over and to make a go of it, eh.

Sally did feel desperate enough at one point to consider giving up her daughter for adoption but decided against it.

> And then there was a couple of times after that when I figured, 'What's the use? What's the point in me going on when nobody believes?' I figured I wasn't doing her any good or myself any good. She never listened to me and there was times when I just felt like giving up and wondering, 'Well, what's the use of me trying so hard to raise this daughter of mine when I can't do it.' There was a time when I thought, 'Maybe I should give her up and let her have two parents that are understanding and that will try to do some good for her.' But then I didn't want to let her go either.

The difficulties Sally experiences with her daughter have continued. Again she makes a connection between her daughter's present problems and the violence she witnessed as a small child.

But even when her father was alive, already I felt that there was something missing. Quite a bit of damage had been done already. Like from the time she was little she'd get up in the night when he came home and she'd see him hitting me. And then after he'd go get her and calm her down. She was small, but she must have had some sort of feelings about what was going on, eh, when he started turning her against me. And then see, like her father would do anything for her, and then I think she kind of felt alone too then, cause he was there no longer, eh.

Like still I have trouble with her, eh. She's so mature for her age. Like she's grown up too fast. Like sometimes I see her just looking at me and I wonder what she's thinking about anyway. I don't know what to talk to her about – I just don't. I just find that she's so mature for her age. I don't know, it seems like she understands so much of what she wants, and she seems to do it her own way – she has a lot of independence. And she made me feel like, I don't know now, maybe sometimes like she didn't love me, because she was distant from me. And she made me feel at times that she didn't need me. There were lots of times when I wanted to comfort her or something, and she didn't want me to. It was just like, 'Get away from here! I don't need you!' type of thing. She doesn't want anybody to tell her what she should be feeling, because she knows herself. I know she's no dummy. She doesn't want to be told anything. It's like she knows it all already. There are times when I want to holler at her and get mad at her and she just looks at me. Sometimes I think she's just daring me. I don't know what it is. Like she's been through so much already too. Maybe she doesn't remember but she sensed things and she must have grown up with some feelings.

Sally has turned to her mother for support around her daughter, but her mother's interference and lack of understanding creates an additional problem. Sally worries about her daughter, hoping for a more positive relationship with her than she had with her own mother.

And sometimes I've had my mom keep her but she gets lonesome; she gets sick when she doesn't see me. And then when we get home it starts all over again. You know, when we're alone it's good but when my mom comes down she changes too. When my mom is there she talks back and when just the two of us are alone she's fine. Rebecca was to the point where she was very rude to me, and there was times when I would have to spank her, because I felt she needed it. And I figured, 'If I let her keep going and going, she's going to step over my head, and then what is she going to grow up to be? Nobody's going to be able to handle her.' And when my mom was there, Rebecca seemed like she'd just get worse – she'd tell me where to go, just straight to my face. If I'd start to set her straight or spank her when my mother was there, my mother would start talking, 'Oh, don't do that to her! She's got no father! Leave her alone!' And Rebecca knew what was going on, eh. So she used this more. I felt like, 'Aaaaah! What am I going to do?' Like I was trying my best to do what I thought was right. But it seems like along the line I was always being put down, when I needed support, from my mother mainly, which I never got. And with my daughter, like I always used to worry about, like with the attitude she had then, what was it going to be like when she got a couple of years older or whatever? Then how is she going to be able to deal with the problems then, if she can't deal with them now? Or that she doesn't want to? Well, I figure when she grows up and she figures she needs someone to talk to, I'd like her to know that I'm there and that I will listen to her. But I figure if she keeps this up, she's going to figure that I don't know any better anyway. I worry about the kind of relationship we'll have when she gets older too. I don't want her to feel she can't talk to me like I couldn't to my mom.

As stressful as it has been for Sally, raising her daughter alone under difficult circumstances, Sally values her daughter above everything else. In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" she first replied:

> That I have my daughter – she's my own and she's all I've really got. She's my daughter and like I want to be the right kind of mother so I can help her. There are times when she's helped me. I have to keep going because she needs me. She keeps me going. I had her when I was young and because it was hard for me I want her to have a good life and I hope she does.

She also values her work, as a paid homemaker for people in need, for several reasons: it gives her an opportunity to meet people, it feels good to help others, it's interesting and challenging, and it feels good to her that she can support herself and her daughter.

> I like my work. It's going out and meeting and being with different people. And I like it because it never gets boring and it makes me feel good to know I have helped out somebody else. And I know the reason I'm called out to work for these people is that they need help, eh. And I don't always come out a winner, but it's a challenge. And it's something good because it never gets boring – there's something different all the time, eh. It means a lot to me because it does give me a chance to know that I'm working and supporting myself and my girl, so that feels good. My daughter, she's got everything she needs, eh. The things she's got she never got from anybody else. So that makes me feel pretty good too.

In the same vein Sally values the home she has for herself and her daughter – a trailer she now owns. She also values having her own vehicle.

> And I have a place of my own. It makes me feel more secure to know I've actually got a home for my girl and me. It's something to say, 'That's ours!' It's a real home – not just something you're renting when you're moving all the time. It's not much but it's all there and it's *ours*.
> And I've got my own vehicle. The car means first of all for my job, getting from place to place. And going to see my parents and just using it to go out. And that I know that it's there if I want to go out.

Sally is aware that she assumed adult responsibilities and experienced tremendous stresses when still a child. Her present life is also full of stress in that her relationships with her boyfriend and her mother make her feel anxious and conflicted.

> Growing up was just so fast for me. It seems like I was just out of diapers and I was in a home raising a baby of my own, which I just was myself. And at the time when I was supposed to be coping on my own, there was times when I was scared, cause I wasn't sure if I was going to make the right decisions or what would I do if the baby got sick and I was home alone. And things about my budgeting and things like that. It was a lot of worries! A couple times I felt like it was too much, but I kind of pushed it out of my mind. Because I figured if I kept thinking that way I wouldn't be able to handle things. So I tried to forget about it, but even then it wasn't easy. Then I was living with another guy, but it's been over a year since we split up. Like, I still talk to him but I don't want to live with him. He started to bug me. Like I sat down and told him that I just need to do what I want, but he just doesn't seem to want me to live my own life, see. And I get the same thing from my mom. She wants me to do what she wants and she doesn't want me to go out at all. I get this feeling like I can't breathe because she's always telling me

> not to do things. I've got this girlfriend – she's a single parent too – and I like to go out with her. We just go out to the bar and sit and talk. It's good because you can see other people and you don't have to just think about your own troubles. I always go back home so I don't see what's so bad about what we're doing. But when Mom comes she wants me to stay at home. She doesn't want me to go out with my girlfriend, even if it's just for a cup of coffee she gets upset. I'd like to sit down and talk to her about it. Like you see, when I was little my grandmother had me and my mom used to be gone quite a bit. So how come she's so worried about me now? I've never had the chance to go out and do things like other young girls did because I was home being a mother at such a young age. And now I want to go out and I need it, but I don't want her to be mad at me. I know I have to talk to them. That's probably why my Mom keeps doing to me what she's doing and that guy keeps bugging me. I let them do it to me I guess. But I hate to hurt them, so how can I stick up for myself? I have to convince myself.

At one time the problem with her boyfriend felt so desperate and hopeless to Sally that she deliberately took an overdose of pills. In partial answer to the question, "What do you value about yourself?", she explains her feelings at the time and her perception that she had no alternative.

> Sometimes I felt like giving up. It was just two years ago that I OD'd. It was because of that guy I had been living with. I wasn't sleeping and I just kept talking and talking and talking to him and couldn't get through, and it seemed like everytime I turned around he was there. He made me feel like I was just locked in and couldn't get out, eh. He wasn't giving me a chance to breath and when I talked to him and it didn't do any good, I just didn't know what to do anymore. And that's when I OD'd. And then afterwards when I realized what I had done I could have kicked my rear end, eh, because I let him get to me so bad. I was mad at myself for letting myself get that way – that he could get to me so much. But it just kept building up and I just couldn't handle it anymore. And the same thing was with Mom about me going out. Like you see, lots of times when we were together we'd split up, but he'd keep bugging me and bugging me to take him back. And those were hard times for me. I just didn't know what to do and I just didn't want him around, eh. Like I wanted to just go on with my life and meet different people and I just felt like he was in my way. I didn't know how to cope with it. Like I'd talk to him and it didn't do any good. He wouldn't leave me alone and I wanted to be left alone. I couldn't see any way out I guess.

Sally's desperate act had only a temporary effect on her boyfriend. She is still trying to cope with the pressure he is putting on her to be with him, and is in conflict about how best to deal with him.

> After I OD'd I was in the hospital, and after that he left me alone a bit – he cooled off. But after a couple months it was the same thing again. We had been split up already, but he was still bothering me all the time. Now I do want to go out and have friends, but I'm scared because I don't want anything to end up like that, eh. I told him I hate him but it hasn't sunk in. Like he's been over to visit and when he's been drinking I could just scream. Like I told him when he phoned and asked me if I want to go out for coffee, or ask me if he could come over, I'd say, 'NO!' but he comes anyway. Like I get *really mad*, eh. But I keep it all covered up. Maybe that's why he keeps on. I'm too easy on him, eh. Because he's really been living on easy street. He sat back there while I was working and he wasn't working and he had nothing to worry about. I was paying all the bills. Like even now I don't hate him. I don't want to hate him but if he keeps bugging me and he's going to get worse, pretty soon for sure I won't want to see his face. And he keeps doing it! He's not

> that dumb. It's just that maybe he just doesn't want to give up because he knows he had it easy then. I don't know. The last time he came around, I said I was going to call the cops. But I hate to go that far. Maybe I should sit down with him and tell him again that I don't want him bugging me. If I don't do the fighting, who's going to do it for me?

In partial answer to the question, "What are your feelings about the Women's Movement?", Sally reflects on why her boyfriend may not have listened to her pleas to be left alone. At the same time she recognizes that she was not *supposed to* be too critical about his behaviour.

> Well, this guy I was living with. Like I told him I wanted to be alone and not living with him because it wasn't doing me any good and I just wasn't happy about the whole situation. And like I've talked to him several times and he wouldn't listen or he just didn't want to listen to me. Like I told you before, I talked to him, and I talked to him more than once, and he still keeps bugging me. He won't listen so maybe he figures I'm too dumb and don't know what I want. I think it's just that men don't want to listen to ladies. They probably figure that we don't know our own feelings, so they don't listen to us. They hear us but that's about all. And it just about kills them if you hurt their ego. Telling them they're no good, that's enough right there. But if you say, 'Okay, what good are you? What are you doing? Nothing! Who's making the living? Who's getting up and going to work every morning? I am. What are you? You're just sitting around here doing nothing. You're useless and you're no good.' That's bad!

The conflict Sally feels with her mother began long ago, when she was a small child. She describes her early childhood and the conflicting feelings she had toward her mother – missing her, hating her and blaming her – and the guilty feelings she had about her own anger.

> I lived with my grandma when I was about four or five years old. My mom and dad – well, my dad was gone and my mother, she used to go out to parties and go out with girlfriends, and I'm sure there were times when she'd be boozing it up. And it seems like she just didn't care for me at that time – I was just in her way, was how I felt. And I didn't really like living with my grandmother cause there were too many people there. And even though my mom was gone during those days, I always missed her. And as I grew up I felt like there was something in me that hated her for leaving me. There was times when she was gone when I wanted her, and she wasn't there. Then after when I did have her as a mother, like I couldn't really talk to her, or she wouldn't really tell me the facts of life and growing up. So in a way I think sometimes I blamed her for leaving me too. After we got back together I was a spoiled brat, I guess you would say – I wanted things done my way. I was with my grandma for about a year. But after when I got older I kept blaming my mother for leaving me. I never forgot it! So then I kept thinking, 'You owe me something. You've got to pay me back.' I felt that way for a long time, too long really, for my own good. Like I made her feel guilty and she used to do a lot of things for me that she didn't have to do, like cooking what I wanted to eat and helping me put my clothes on. Like she'd jump when I'd say jump! And then after, as I got older, like that bugged me, because I felt then I was using my mother, once I got old enough to realize what I was doing. And then by that time it came to be a habit. And then again, I was thinking to myself, 'Why did you let me get this far? Why did you let me do this?'

Sally was happy when her parents were reunited. Still, sometimes she felt sorry for her

father and resented what she perceived to be her mother's betrayal of him. She describes these feelings as well as her fears about stating them.

> When I was at home with both my parents, both my mom and dad used to be happy. They got along good. I was happy to see them happy. But there was still times when I seen my dad and like to myself I would think, 'If only you knew what Mom did when you was gone?' But I never did say anything for fear I'd be back at my grandmother's again. I didn't think he knew I was at my grandmother's, but like I didn't know. And like I felt sorry for my dad, just because of my mom going out drinking and being with other people. Like I figured that she shouldn't have done that to him. Then I felt sorry for my dad because like I thought he didn't know anything about this. And yet I'd see them happy and I used to think, 'If only you knew what she had done!' And sometimes I'd be mad at my mother when I'd think along those lines. But then still in a way I didn't want to hurt her, and I didn't want her to do that again! Anyway, we used to get along good. I think I got my way a lot. Things I wanted, we never had much money, but they tried to give me everything I wanted.

Though she did not feel close to her mother, Sally felt and still feels close to an older cousin, who continues to be supportive to her today.

> More than my mother, my cousin looked after me. She's very close to me still. Like she used to spend a lot of time with us. Like she'd come and stay with us for a month or whatever and then she'd leave and she was always coming back. And there was times when she'd give me a darn good spanking, cause I was spoiled, eh. But yet like I always felt good when I knew she was coming. It just seemed like something in me lit up when I knew she was around. She was important to me. Like even when she spanked me and all that, like it didn't bother me, I didn't care. I guess I loved her! I took her as my sister more or less, eh. And see when I lived at my grandma's, she was there at my grandma's too, and she was the only girl there. And see, all the other guys were *guys*, my uncles, and they were all older and they used to pick on us all the time. So we really were close – like we were together quite a bit. I'm still really, really close with her today. I felt she was someone I could turn to because I could always talk to her. When I couldn't talk to Mom I could always talk to her. And now that I'm having trouble with Mom, I can still talk to her. She realizes that Mom is trying to run my life. I think she's tried to talk to my mom about it, but it just doesn't do any good, eh? She has come over to the trailer while Mom was there, and heard Mom tell me I shouldn't go out. And she's said, 'But that's her house, and if you want to go and stay there you should accept what she wants to do.'

Sally contemplated several reasons why her mother does not support her. She also described how she experiences her mother needing and depending upon her.

> I suppose Mom's afraid for me like all mothers are. Maybe she thinks she should have told me more before, but it's a little bit too late for that now. Like, I told her straight out, 'It would be different if I was living at home and you were supporting me, but I'm not. So please, please leave me alone! I can't hack it anymore.' I can't handle it, eh? Because I don't like to go against her wishes. It really hurts me now that I've got a chance to go out, she won't let me. We're pretty close you know. Like I know when I'm out of town she can't stand it. She gets really down in the dumps until I get back. I don't know what she's doing – if she's trying to protect me or what. I wish I could say something to her. I would like to sit down and have a talk with her but I don't know how to begin. From what I said do you think she's trying to run my life? She knows that I'm not dating or anything. Like I've told her, 'I'm on my own now; let me live my life.' But she doesn't seem to want to

> understand. Maybe she's afraid, knowing my experiences I had. Maybe she's afraid I'm going to meet someone and settle down with someone no good. She doesn't know I don't want that. Maybe it would help if we talked, because I need her. I had told her once before that if she didn't leave me alone I was thinking about moving out of town. I thought if I said that to her she'd believe me – she'd try to understand or something, but it didn't work, eh. I wanted to move out of town to get away from her, so she wouldn't depend on me so much. But then I was also guilty of moving in case something did happen to her and I didn't stick around. So I wanted to go and yet I was scared to go. But I was willing to make the change. But then something else held me back, because I felt it would be harder if something did happen and if I was gone, because then I'd just have to live with the guilt. But I just wonder what she would do if I was to move out of town. I'd probably feel better because it's not doing me any good sticking around here having trouble with her too. I usually don't associate with most of my relatives. I've got lots of cousins, especially on my mother's side, but I just don't bother with them.

In contrast to the resentment and anger Sally felt toward her mother, she felt close to her father, wanted to please him and in fact helped him with commercial fishing when he needed her.

> I always tried to please my daddy. When I was a kid I was always happy. He was always there. He never spanked me. When I got older I was always wanting to go out and do things with him. I don't know if I wanted to please him or what it was. I used to be a commercial fisherman with him. Sometimes he couldn't find anybody to go with him. I had my girl then and I was on my own. He used to pick me up about five in the morning and we'd go out fishing and come home. Because he couldn't get anybody, but he needed the money so I'd go to work with him. It made me feel like I was doing something good for my father. I was helping him get the things he wanted and that he needed – money for groceries or whatever. I wasn't living at home at this time. I used to go fishing with him when I was just little, out on the lake, but I didn't start commercial fishing until I was gone from home. I had my daughter, and if I couldn't find a babysitter I'd bundle her up and take her on the lake with me. And like I felt really, really close to my dad. And I felt he really loved me and I loved him – like that's the feeling I got, eh. There was a lot of love. And like I always felt good with him and I wanted him to notice I was around, alive we'll say. I could sit back and joke with Dad and have a good time with him and laugh.

Her desire not to hurt her father meant she had to keep things from him, however, things she felt free to tell her mother. This, in part, explains why Sally presently experiences conflict with her mother but not with her father.

> But, like when I'd talk to Mom lots of times, I wouldn't want Dad to hear. I don't know. I'm kind of scared of him, but I don't know why. Like I notice now, the things I'm doing, or what I've done, I don't want Dad to know about them. Like I was kind of scared of him in a way. Not scared maybe but I didn't tell him things because I didn't want to hurt him, I guess. I didn't want to hurt his feelings. A lot of things I kept from him because I didn't want to hurt him, like that incident with my mother, and stuff with my own life – like the way I was being treated. Like he had a fairly good idea. Like my mother, there were times when she'd hit me and she'd be mean with me, but I'd never tell my dad. And like with my marriage, like my husband gave me a few good lickings because I'd feed my parents dinner or supper or whatever, and I didn't want my dad to know anything about that. Because I thought he'd just be hurt and worried. And one thing was I didn't want my dad ever to worry about me either, cause I figured I'd put him through enough when I'd got

> pregnant. I had a lot of respect for him, eh. And I figured I'd done enough damage by getting pregnant, cause I knew he wasn't happy about that.
>
> And now I still tell my mom things that I wouldn't tell my dad, like that I go to the bars. I don't think he'd be very happy about that. I guess maybe I'd feel like I was letting him down. I can tell my mom and it doesn't bother me to tell her. I don't tell Dad but I think she's been telling him. I know a couple times she's phoned and asked me if the boys could stay with me and I've said, 'No, cause I'm going out.' And she says, 'Why don't you every stay home sometimes?' I don't like it, but I do respect my parents. I wish I knew what to do. I know that if my dad knew I was going out to the bars he wouldn't like it. And Mom doesn't like it. But still, I like to get out. But I don't like to go against my parents wishes either.

Understanding the circumstances of Sally's parents' lives also explains why Sally experiences more conflict with her mother. Her father's work takes him away from home much of the time and her mother is left alone with three other children (one a baby). Her mother turns to her for support and at the same time is judgmental and tries to control her.

> You see, Dad's a trapper. And Mom's got two boys and a baby who's two, and she comes in to stay with me and I don't mind. When they're at home and need something, they depend on me. When they come into town to do their shopping, they drop off the kids and expect me to keep them. There's a lot of times when, especially my oldest brother who is 11 years old, he stays at my place. So I've got my girl plus him, and then my mother and the other kids come. It makes it hard on me. It's my own home and I really don't feel free when she's there and I just don't feel right in my own home. And then I don't want to go out with my girlfriends because I think 'Well my mom's going to get mad.' But I just get so mad. She spoils the kids and I just have to get out. She wants to tell me what to do when she's there. Like it's not my own home. She just kind of takes it over for the time she's there. It's kind of hard because it's supposed to be my own home but I don't feel like it is when she's there. But when she asks me if she can come in and stay, I don't like to say no. I wish she could come and realize it's my place and my life, but she doesn't. I don't even like having friends come over when she's there because she acts like she owns the place. Does that sound unreasonable? It does make me feel bad because the few times my girlfriends have come over to have coffee and Mom just goes and sits in the other room. She won't join us for coffee and she acts like she's mad. It makes me feel awful. I tried talking to her but I'm kind of scared to get right into it because I don't want to hurt her feelings either. But when she's there I might want to get into cleaning up the place or sit and just relax, and I can't because she's there. I don't like to do my work when she's there. It doesn't make me feel right. I'm supposed to be doing my work and she's sitting there and I'm not talking to her. I don't know. I just don't feel like doing anything when she's there. And then when I do clean up, my sister's there and she comes along and messes everything up. And I can't relax because she's spoilt and screams. Like she's my shadow. Usually when I go out to have coffee at my girlfriend's I take her along. I can't even go out of the house to visit a girlfriend – she's got to come with me. Or the boys do something and Mom gets upset with them, and then I get mad and try to tell them something, and she doesn't like that either. Sometimes I don't know how I keep going. All those things together.

Again, Sally wonders what she can do to solve the conflict.

> What can I do to make my mother understand? She just doesn't want to give me a chance. You know we get along other than that. But I just don't understand why she does that. If I talk to her I wonder if she'll tell me the true reasons or if she's going to turn around and say something to make me feel guilty, so I'll just end up crying. Cause I find when I'm home alone with my little girl, like I'm not in any hurry to get out, you know? I need to know exactly what bothers her. If it's just my going out that's bugging her what do I do? Stop going out just to please her? Then if I do that she'll never stay out of my life. I wonder if it will do my any good? Can't do me any harm.

That the conflicts Sally experiences in relation to her boyfriend and her mother are central to her life is validated by her answers to other questions. Asked "What do you value in your life?" she replied,

> My family. I value them too. Like we have our differences and that but I still don't care how many differences we have, I couldn't get along without them. Like if I know they knew where I was living, I feel good just to know they're there. I know they'd always be there if I needed somebody. And my brother and sister. I always wanted to have a brother and sister of my own. I've got them but it was kind of late. But at least I still have them. And I hope some day I'll be able to help them when they get older. I'll be there when they need me.
>
> Well, life is important to me I guess. Just the fact of being alive and I know I'm gonna be here so I want to make the best of it. But it's just difficult at times. But I have to go on. I can't really say that for me to go out is something I value. Like I can go out but it's just not the same, you know, because Mom's against it. So that's what makes it different. So it's something you'd like to have but you don't quite have it yet. Well if it's going to end up making that much trouble, then I don't know if I really want it. I don't want to fight for it. I really don't want to be on the wrong side of my family because it would really make me feel bad if they were living as close as they are and I couldn't see them. They just live two miles out of town. And when they come into town they can just stop in or I go out once or twice during the week to see them, and usually every Sunday. Maybe if I stopped going out there so often it would help them realize.

And in answer to the question, "What do you resent in your life?", Sally replied,

> Probably what I resent now is that Mom won't let me live the kind of life that I want to on my own. And that other guy that I went with that won't leave me alone. That's my two biggest problems. If I could just be left alone and not have somebody checking up on me saying, 'Don't go there', or 'Don't do this.' I don't like it. Now, before I go somewhere I think, 'What's Mom going to say?' Or he phones and he has something to say about what I'm doing. So these resentments are from right now. It's because I can't deal with it. Probably a few years down the line when I can deal with this it won't be a problem, but now it is. But what can you do about it? That's all I want to say about that. What good is it going to do me to say anything about it?

Further, that this conflict has a negative effect on Sally's mental health is evidenced in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?"

> Powerless – I feel powerless when I let my Mom and this guy get to me. I know what I have to do – I keep telling myself, but I can't. Sometimes I feel like a loser. I know I could probably do something more if I tried hard, but I don't, not because I don't want to, because I don't want to hurt people's feelings. I guess that means I'm more concerned about their feelings than my own. Yeah! I feel powerful because I'm still here, wanting to live my own

> life, even though the past let me down. And I feel powerless sometimes when I let people get to me. That's about it.

Finally, we see from Sally's reply to the question, "What do you dislike in yourself?" that she dislikes that she is unable to confront her mother and former boyfriend. However, even in stating this she changed her focus to what she assumed they must be thinking about her, demonstrating her continued conflict about her right to confront them.

> What I don't like about myself is letting other people walk over me. I do it but I don't like it. If I could change that life would be easy. Now that I know where I want to go, I just have to do the walking. I'd like to be able to get this all talked out with them, my mom and that guy. I think I'll have to do it . I don't know if it's so much what I don't like in myself, but what I don't like is people figuring I'm not capable of handling things. They don't give me enough credit for what I do. I guess they're always trying to see me as not able. Sometimes I feel unsure – that I don't like. Well, like people not thinking I'm capable of doing things and I know it's happening, and happening all the time, and it makes me kind of think, 'Maybe I'm not.' I don't like people walking all over top of me, and yet it seems I can't say 'No!' I don't know when to stop them, and that's bugging me. Cause I really don't like to hurt anybody else. I feel like if I do draw the line, I'm going to be hurting other people.

In her need to understand her life and get support, Sally at one point turned to religion. She explains why this did not help her, in partial respond to the question, "What do you value about yourself?"

> See, after I lost my husband I turned to religion. There were so many questions I wanted to know. Like how God came about, how humans came about, and what it was going to be like after we died – those sort of questions. How life began, more or less, I guess, was what was bugging me. I guess I was looking for a lot of answers, eh. But I couldn't get any answers from the priest. And they'd say, 'Well, I suppose this or that' and 'Well, I don't know.' So I figured, 'Well, hell, if this is all the answers I'm going to get, I don't need to be going to a church. I'll go home and I'll study my Bible and I'll get what I can out of it. And that way it'll be me accepting it and not having to hear it from another person.' So I stopped going to church cause it wasn't doing me any good.

Sally still has questions about her life. As she describes her conflicts it becomes apparent that the fact of limited alternatives for a single parent in a small town adds to her problems.

> But I guess there's still some things I'd like to know. Like, am I doing the right thing? Like about going out, I wonder and think and sometimes it makes me feel guilty. Like 'Here I am, a widow. I have a child; I should be home looking after it.' But then I knew I wouldn't be able to be by myself all the time and not be with people. But it always came back down that I shouldn't be leaving my girl – I was a mother and I should be home with her. Do you see anything wrong with what I'm doing – going out with my friends? I like to go out with my women friends. But do you think it's bad to be going out to the bar? What else can you do here? You can't go to a cafe all evening. Like, sure, I could go to her place or she could come to mine, but you have to get *out*. Sometimes we go to hockey games, just for something to do, but when there are no games, then where can we go? At least we always go back home. At least we're both keeping our jobs. Ours kids are being looked after all the time.

Sally ponders on the general lack of understanding on the part of others, as regards her past experiences, and on her own hesistancy to talk about her problems in the past. She recognizes a link between these factors and her nervous breakdowns.

> I've had to fight my whole life! I know I've been through a lot, but there's not that many people who understand. And they don't understand that now I just want to laugh a little and need to talk. It used to be so hard. I had two nervous breakdowns. I think I had the nervous breakdowns by trying to keep everything inside of me. I didn't talk too much about what was bothering me.

While Sally has not received the understanding and support she needed from her mother or religion, or society in general, she has found women friends who meet these needs. She describes what her friends mean to her.

> It makes me feel good just to go out with my girlfriends and have some fun together. At least when I go out I don't have to think about all the things I think of at home. When I go out I just feel relaxed. I can just leave my problems at home for awhile; forget the responsibilities. My friend and I are pretty open. She gets down about her situation too sometimes and she can talk to me. And when I'm down I can talk to her. It makes me feel good to know someone can understand my feelings. Like I know she should be able to because we're in similar situations. And we can be together and have a good time too. Having her as a friend, to me makes me feel like there is somebody who understands me, and someone who doesn't make me feel guilty for the things I'm doing, like going out to the bars. And she is a separated mother with three children of her own, so she knows what it's like to be alone and to raise your kids by yourself. So this is why I feel pretty close to her, because she is going through much the same things as I am. And she's getting stepped on too, from her side of the family, around here, cause they don't like her going out either and leaving her kids home. And I got this other girlfriend I go to ceramics with, and I'm really open with her. Like I can talk to her really, really openly, and I talk to her quite a bit about my mom. And she comes over to have coffee quite a bit, so she can see what's going on. And she knows that whenever Dad leaves and Mom does decide to stay home, I'd be out there the first night. Because a lot of the times we'd have something planned and I'd be getting a phone call. And there's this other friend of mine that I'm really open with, and she understands what Mom is doing to me. And she trys to tell me to put my foot down, but I'm just too scared, I guess. To me having those ladies for friends like that, it makes me feel like I've got support from them and I must not be all a bad person for going out and doing all these things. Otherwise I wouldn't have no friends at all. Because I don't see those ladies as being bad. And I made friends with them. I talked to another friend and asked her if she thought my going out was wrong. She told me it was my life, I'm grown up and I've been on my own for a long time. And she told me it was things that I hadn't done. She says, 'Okay, now's your chance to go out and do the things that you missed.' She says, 'When a person's growing up, regardless of who you are, you kind of like to get all those experiences in. I don't see anything wrong with you going out.' Well that made me felt like she was understanding, that she didn't want me to get the wrong impressions of myself or to try to let my mother rule my life. Those were the kinds of impressions I got talking to her. I felt that she was being very supportive to me.

Confirmation as to how much Sally's women friends mean to her is found in her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> Friends – somebody who I feel comfortable with, someone who I can trust, and someone who I can be serious with and have fun with. I have three friends like that – all women. It's important that I know I've got a friend like that. So that when I need somebody to talk to, I've got somebody there, and I know I won't have to worry about it going any further. And it's just a good feeling to know that there is a friend that you can trust enough to say whatever is bothering you to her. It helps to have a friend to talk to. I go and visit her and have coffee and we start talking, and we talk for awhile and then we get depressed, and then say, 'To hell with this; let's go out.' So we go out for a drive or to the bar or to visit some other girl. Then I feel better. We end up joking around. You've got to laugh sometimes.

Having women friends in the same situation as herself has been especially helpful to Sally. Not only do they understand each other's feelings very well but together they have worked out what they would like in a relationship with a man, when they are ready for that step.

> When you sit home alone, you know, you get lonely. It's an empty feeling. And it helps just to sit and talk to my girlfriend about it. You can't talk seriously to guys about it. It's not the same. You can't talk about your feelings to them. See, my girlfriend and I, we both don't want to get serious with guys, but then we still have that lonely feeling sometimes, and want to get out and have someone to talk to. But we're scared to get serious. We're not ready to get serious. I don't want to get into a situation like I had before, when I was first married. And then this past experience that I had was just not what I wanted either. Once I settle down I want it to be with someone I can talk to, someone who can be a good parent to my girl, someone who can settle down and be serious and not fool around. I was settled down so young that I never had the chance to just go out and have fun, and now I have that chance. I like to go out, as long as I have someone to look after my girl, and not have to explain to anybody about what I've been doing. It's just that I don't want to feel tied down. I like to go out, even if it's just for a cup of coffee or for a ride and then home again. Like I'd really like to date – somebody who I know is going to be respectable enough to date. And I'm scared about getting serious. Sure I'd like to have a companion, someone to talk to, but if I do that, what about my freedom? I'm not ready to give that up – not yet. I had to grow up pretty fast. Too fast! Like after I got married and had the baby, like it never bothered me that I had to stay home. It just didn't bother me. I don't know if it's just because I didn't want to think about it or why. But now that I've done that I wonder, 'What did I miss?' I'd like a chance to find out. It seems like I just went from a kid to an adult and never was a teenager.

In spite of her continuing troubles, Sally maintains that she does not regret the difficult life she has had. She explains in answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?", that she has learned from her experience, and that she does not wish to negate the positive aspects of her experience (her daughter and her strength to survive). Further, she believes that continued resentment would not help her now.

> Oh, I don't know. The things that have happened – I can't say I regret them because I have learned things from my past experience. Like from my marriage. It wasn't that good but I learned I wouldn't want to live like that again. It wasn't good but I haven't regretted it because it's over. It's something to learn from. And it's something I have learned something from. Let's see, what else? I don't say I regret that I had my girl at the age I did, because like now I have her and she means a lot to me. And, well, like my

> teen-age years. I had them while I was raising her, but I can't say I regret that because I don't really know what that would have been like. I'm sorry I missed it, but.... Well, like I liked school and it did bother me quite a bit what happened between my teacher and I, and it did make me wonder what would have happened if I'd finished school. I've had difficult times but I've really got no reason to regret them. Well I could say sure, I resent the teacher and I could say I resent not having my teenage years, but then if I say that I'd feel bad because I'd sound like I resent having my daughter - like blaming her for it. And I don't want to blame her for it. That business with my teacher, that bothered me for a long time, but it was so long ago that it seems useless to think about it now. I don't let it bother me. It's a thing that happened to me a long time ago. It could have been different I guess, but I had to struggle to get to where I am now in my life so I don't let that bother me anymore. I've forgotten about it. I live for now and not for the past. It's too late to be resentful for that part of my life. What could I do about it?

That Sally has put her past behind her and grown from her experiences is validated in her answers to the question, "What do you value in yourself?"

> Just being me I guess. Well, like the trouble with my mom, it bugs me quite a bit, like it bothers me a great deal, but I can still shrug my shoulders and laugh about something else. I'm trying to fight it off so it doesn't get to me. So I like that, I guess. And that I can go out and help people that need my help. I really, really do feel good when I know I have helped someone out who I like. And being able to provide for my daughter and myself. I guess it makes me feel like I'm good for something. It means that I can depend on myself, I guess, that I can do it and not have somebody else do it for me. Do you know what I mean? What else do I value about myself? I've never really thought about that. Being a mother, because it means a lot to me that for the age I am that I've been through all the things I've been through. I feel like I should be a lot older. I feel like I've been a long way already. After I lost my husband I could have went down real quick, eh, but there was just this last feeling I had left that I had to get up and go and take care of my daughter. She needed me and so she's helped me a lot too.

Further, that Sally gained strength in knowing she has coped with her life circumstances is evidenced in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerful?"

> How do I think I'm powerful? Because I'm still here; because I haven't given up, I guess. I had lots of chances to give up. And that I've accomplished all that I have. Like that I bought my car - I worked for it. And my job - I've stuck to it even though it's been no bed of roses. I've managed to work for it - how long have I had it now? Six years. I worked first part-time and I just got on full time just since October. There's lots of cases that I wanted to quit because I couldn't handle them. That plus all the things I had to go through - that I could still help somebody else. That I can still cope with my own life after all I've been through. That I can do it on my own without anybody else. That I can do it alone, be independent. That I don't need to rely on anyone else. It feels good. I'm up there, and independent. I think that's about it.

Sally's valuing of her own life despite her tremendous difficulties, and her sense of power in being able to cope and survive, is indicative of an awareness of her personal strength. Her answer to the question, "What do you think about this saying: It's a man's world?", demonstrates a sense of injustice but no awareness of the political and

economic reality she faces as a woman.

> I don't think that's fair because it's not only a man that's got to live in it. Women do too. I don't think that's a fair saying at all because women have to go through just as much as men do, probably more. It's not a man's world because women have to live in it too.

However, Sally's answer to the question, "What are your feelings about the Women's Movement?" indicates a personal awareness of discrimination against women based on the assumption that they are not credible or capable.

> I think every woman should do what she believes in, what she thinks is right for herself. To me it's that women have to go out and do what's best for them. That's what I think people should do. Just because something's best for some doesn't mean it's best for everyone. It's up to the woman. Women's Liberation means to me, women are people just like men and should be treated as equals. Men are no better. That's the way I look at it. Like if a group of ladies are trying to stand up for women's rights, I don't see anything wrong with that, because I mean, after all, I guess women are usually put down more than men are. And that's bad, cause women are people too. Women and men should be treated like people, not somebody being better than somebody else. Like some men think they're better or think they can do things better. I feel maybe it's because women aren't given a chance. People don't listen to them enough, the way they listen to men. They may be treated the same but a lady can say the same thing and yet a man is going to be treated as respectable and listened to. Like, it's hard for me to answer questions like that, eh? They try to put women down and they treat them like a bunch of dummies. Women aren't given a chance. Because people don't listen to them enough or men don't listen to them enough. They treat them like a bunch of dummies. It's just that because they're men they think they can do some things better because they're smarter than women. You can see it all over the place. Like on the job. Like, some cases I work on, you sit and talk to both of them and I want to hear what the woman has to say, but the guy won't listen, eh. He'll keep on saying something else. And there are times when the woman will say something but the husband always has to say the last words. And with doctors. This is not really so much for myself, but my girlfriend has gone to talk to the doctors and she says something's bothering her and they just give her tranquilizers or valium. Like, maybe if a man was to go in and talk, it probably would be different. It's hard to explain. Like if a lady were saying these were the symptoms they'd say she was going crazy, but if a man were to give the same symptoms the doctor would treat him different. If she's a lady, she can't handle it; and if it's a man it's treated differently. And men are always putting a lady driver down. She's showing what she can do and men don't like that. Guys will say, 'Well, you're only a woman driver, what do you know about your car?' and that, eh. Well like I stopped at a service station to tank the gas up, get my oil checked and transmission fluid checked, and the mechanic couldn't even open my hood. Once I got out there and opened this up for him, checked the oil and he didn't know where the dipstick was for my transmission. And I wasn't in a very good mood that day so I turned around and I says something like, I really don't remember but something to the effect that he was supposed to be working there and he was supposed to know what he was supposed to be doing there. I don't remember, I was late for an appointment or something and I said something about men and women but I just don't really remember what I said, eh? But he was mad at me. But I didn't care because I was madder still. But yeah, that time I do remember that I did say something about men and women that day. Like what they say about ladies, women drivers and that, eh? I remember I had to go and open up the hood for him.

Sally is also aware that equality does not necessarily mean sameness, and that the fact

of women's essential difference from men – that they can have children – is the basis of unfair treatment. Further, she recognizes that this very difference may be a basis for men's lack of understanding of her experience.

> Up to a point, women should be treated as equal as men. I wouldn't want a man thinking he was smarter than me or better than me. But we are different in ways such as women bear children and men can't do that. But men can probably do everything else a woman can do and women can probably do everything a man can do. But because of that difference it seems that a lot of men figure that's all women are good for. I don't think we should be thought of in that way, because there are other jobs women can do just as well as men. I wonder if – it seems like men just don't want to understand the women's needs. Is it just because they're not interested, or is it because they're afraid we're going to get up there and be number one? I wonder if they even realize what we have to go through? There aren't any men that understand what I've gone though at my age.

D. Theresa

Theresa is a 42 year old woman of Ukrainian heritage, born and living in rural Northern Alberta. Her mother is a housewife with a grade seven education. Her father is a farmer with a grade six education. Theresa was the eldest of three daughters. She married at age 17 and has been married for 25 years. Theresa has a grade nine education and has worked as a store clerk and manager, a school bus driver, and is presently a supervisor in a social services program where she makes $15,000 per year. She also has access to $15,000 yearly profit from the farm she lives on with her husband and the $15,000 he makes driving a school bus. In her community Theresa belongs to the Co-op Association and several recreational organizations.

Theresa enjoys being a woman, and doesn't feel restricted because she is one. In answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?", she began:

> That's a hard one. I don't know, I guess I've never thought of being anything else but a woman. I think I enjoy being a woman. I don't think there's anything really stopped me from doing anything if I decided to do it, because I'm a woman. Because if I really decide I'm going to do something I'll learn to do it, or try and do it.

She gave an example to demonstrate what she has done that women weren't *supposed to* do.

> Sometimes at work even, like years ago I guess the most prominent thing in our community probably was when my husband became ill I had to drive the school bus. Like I had guys reporting me and the cops following me. And like we'd go to meetings and I'd be the only woman sitting there with a bunch of guys and so of course, you'd always be – like I don't think I like being noticed or to be standoffish – I just sort of like to be me and be in my own little corner and be an ordinary person kind of thing. But of course we'd go to these meetings and whenever you'd have an instructor or somebody telling you what to do, they'd have to say something about a woman sitting in our midst, which sort of made me squirm.
> But the guy, the one that was reporting me, I later found out who it was and it was a man that was doing it, and like he had the cops on my tail all the time. After a while it got to be like I just expected that the cops were going to be following me. They were maybe hoping I'd go through a stop sign. I don't know. I really have no idea. But I think that the police probably had to act upon a report because the first few times it happened to me I had noticed all of a sudden, there they were behind me. But then afterwards I'd come into little levels of highway for example, and they'd be sitting right in a wide open area and then I'd know they'd be right behind me. So like the first few times I think they followed me out of curiosity or maybe thinking there was something to the report. But afterwards, it was almost obvious to me that they just sat there and sort of made sure that I had seen them. At least that's my feeling.

Although some people considered driving a school bus a man's job, to Theresa it was not. She had grown up on a farm, one of three sisters, and drove a tractor for her

father when she was 11.

> But again, it was nothing new for me because in my family I had no brothers, so my sister and I were the oldest of the three. And I think we had a little bit of a tomboyish attitude because I was almost like Dad on the tractor, and doing all kinds of things that a boy would probably have been doing. I think maybe because I have a farming background kind of thing, where you do need a lot of help at certain times of the year. I was driving a tractor when I was 11 years old for my dad a lot of times. So it just came. Like nobody ever thought you should do it or you shouldn't do it. I just did it. And I learned how to do it and never ever thought about it.

One lesson Theresa learned from the school bus incident was that public attitudes toward women were different from those she learned at home.

> But I know like from that school bus incident, okay that's where you're sort of trying to serve the public and that's when you get it. Like at home on the farm, I don't think anybody ever ridiculed that part, but then when you get out into the public eye, then you start getting a whole different attitude. Because those people start saying, 'Well you shouldn't be doing that, that's not a woman's job'. And I had women come up to me and say, 'Darnit, you know, I'm so glad you did it. I think that's grand that you're driving the bus.' And then there were others that sort of looked down upon it and said, 'Well, she shouldn't be doing it'. So you've got two kinds of reactions from women.

She also learned that if she was going to do a 'man's job', she would have to be better at it than the men. Further, she learned about herself that others' appreciation of her skill felt good, but assumptions about her lack of skill could hurt.

> And I guess, I don't know, from that I've learned that you have to do a darn good job if you are going to do it. For example: Don hit the ditch, the road was bad; I hit the ditch, I was a poor driver. Double standard I guess. And I think from that experience probably, I learned something about, like when you do something that was in competition with a lot of men, like you probably have to be a heck of a lot better at it than a lot of men are. Because if a man went through a stop sign or something people would look the other way and not think anything of it. But a woman, I think they say, 'Well, she's a poor driver', or whatever. Like it was really interesting because then when my husband started driving again, sometimes I used to spare for him. So this one morning he was driving on this road that had no driveway, and it was a terrible road, and he hit the ditch with the kids on. So one of the farm houses it was right by, of course they had heard it and foreseen it, so they all came rushing. And when they got there they were all excited because they were sure it was me driving. And I think it was a little upsetting to me because it hadn't been me. And it was the woman that was probably more concerned about it than the husband would have been because I had ditched. Because I had had several of the men rather admire me for doing that. And in another area I know the road was really bad and if it rained the bus just never went up there. But sometimes you'd get showers in the summertime and you never knew where a shower hit. So often times you'd get caught on that route, so you know I had big problems too. People would say, 'Boy, she's a good driver because she's driven my road'. I guess that made me feel good because at that time I think there weren't a lot of women bus drivers, like today. That's about 18 years ago probably, when I first got my license for driving a school bus. I still have it today; I've sort of kept it up.

At another time when Theresa's husband was ill she ran their farm. Again she experienced people judging her for doing a 'man's job'. She explains how she coped

with both the work and with people's reactions.

> In later life when Don was sick, I ran the farm. And even though I didn't do the heavy physical lifting and that because I couldn't, I ran the machinery, I organized things. He was away so I managed the farm and kept it going, because he was bound and determined he was going to come back and farm, so we weren't going to let the stock and stuff go. Like there would be all kinds of comments like, 'A woman shouldn't be doing that'. I guess things were really none of anybody's business, but you know people tend to make it their business kind of thing. I guess it never ever bothered me because I felt like I really wanted to be in charge. I felt like a partner in our marriage and I mean whether you'd be running a hotel business or farm business or whatever kind of a business you're running, to me it seems a wife is involved in a lot of that. Like I had no trouble running the stuff when Don was away because I knew exactly what to do. We'd always been involved together, so I just could take over and do it. Like I knew what had to be done when, and if the hay was ready to cut, okay, even though I couldn't cut it, I had somebody arrange to come and do it and that kind of thing. It never really bothered me. Sure you worry a lot, just like anybody would about any business. But if an animal was sick I used to go and do vet work with Don, so it didn't bother me. I knew what to look for and I knew what to expect or what could happen or what you could do to prevent it. But when people would make comments, sometimes I'd get angry. A lot of times I would put it to malicious gossip or meddling kind of stuff, and that would make me angry. But I guess in a sense it never really bothered me, or I guess I would have probably crawled into my corner and sort of sat where I was supposed to be sitting, or where they said I was supposed to be sitting kind of thing.

Important to Theresa's successful coping was her experience of being an equal partner in her marriage, and of having the knowledge and determination to manage. She comments on her determination to do what is important to her, regardless of socially defined, restrictive sex-roles.

> But I think, okay if I was a man I probably could do this and this and this and nobody would ever question it, but because I'm a woman, if I choose to do certain things I may be looked down upon or I may be ridiculed. Like I know for example, if my husband stopped at the bar every night after work before he came home, people wouldn't think anything of it, but I would bet that if I stopped for a week straight people would be saying, 'Oh, must be something wrong in their marriage. What's she stopping at the bar for?' So I guess I know there are certain restrictions because I am a woman and certain areas that if I chose – I guess if I really made up my mind to do something, I do it whether anybody says something or not. But I'd have to feel comfortable about it myself. But I don't think I'd look at it, you know, is it right, or is this your role because you're a woman kind of thing. I don't think I've ever though of it in that manner. I've always thought of it as me being just a person.

How Theresa came to be determined to do what was important to her, regardless of what people thought about women's 'proper place' becomes clear when she talks about her childhood. She describes how her mother actively fought her father's ideas that as a woman she should know her place!

> When I think back, like to my Dad, even though he utilized all us sisters as just a helping hand around the farm, I think his ideas were very much that a woman should probably be certain kinds of things – she should know her place. I guess maybe I get my rebellious nature from my mother because I remember from away back when her and Dad would have heavy discussions or arguments about why is it that way. So it's probably from my mom, where I get my ideas and strengths of doing whatever you choose to do. Even though she was restricted in a certain sense, because Dad would raise his eyebrows about something he wouldn't have liked. Like my Dad has the whole idea that man should be the boss of the family or the household. He should have all the say, to where every penny goes, to what gets done around the house or that kind of thing. Where I think Mom's probably fought back against that a whole lot.

Reflecting on how differently from some other women she reacts, she recognizes her mother's influence on her own behaviour.

> It probably had an effect on my life even though I never thought of it that way. But I suspect it probably did. Because if you go back, like when I had training sessions at work one time, and we had a fair amount of native ladies in the sessions and I remember them talking about their roles – like the submissive roles of how they are battered more than white women and why – like they were questioning this kind of thing. And I guess my whole idea to that is that they have let that happen and they continue to, sort of; they're afraid to step out.

Theresa describes also her great-grandmother's influence on her mother and herself.

> I think my great-grandmother was probably a women's libber in the 30's. She raised three boys and two girls and had a real bad marriage. But when her husband tended to get – like he was of the nature that he thought there was nothing wrong with giving your wife a licking if she needed it – and I guess she didn't accept it. She walked out of that situation. She told him as soon as she was able – at that time it was pretty hard for a woman to make it on her own – but when the kids got a little older, she farmed and she raised the rest of the kids and she gave him the boot and told him to get. And then like my mom's mom was just the opposite. So this would have been her mother and my grandmother. She was exactly the opposite. Like she probably accepted a lot of abuse from her dad, according to what my mom says. But I guess my mom says that she always seen that as a kid, and there was no way she was ever going to put up with that kind of thing. I've often heard her talk about it, from the time when I was three years old. Like mom would say, 'I put up with a lot of stuff around here but there's one thing I'm never going to put up with and that's a husband deciding that he has the right to beat me up because he doesn't like something I said or did.' Whether it was serious business or in a laughing way, that was always her idea of the thing, and I guess maybe that sort of was instilled in my mind, and I accepted it. And I guess I went along the same, or maybe we both have the same rebellious nature. Because no matter how Dad would try and put her down, I don't think she quite accepted it. She'd fight back or she'd say, 'Well you don't know. I'm just as good a person as you are and just because you are the man doesn't mean anything.'

That Theresa appreciates her great-grandmother, and the personal qualities of determination and strength that enabled her to take action in spite of public criticism, is evidenced in the following passage. Theresa believes, too, that like her great-grandmother, all women must be strong and take action to effect change.

> I think living, well, I don't know so much if today's society is any worse than it was, but my grandmother's age, or great-grandmother – I'm sure when she decided to boot her husband out, like I can just imagine. I wish she were alive today so I now, at this age, could talk to her. I remember her telling all the stories when we were so high, and that sort of stuck with me, but like today I think I would have a lot of questions I'd like to ask her and I just wish she were around. Like I think she was a liberated lady at that time. She had to have faced a whole lot of ridicule because she went against everybody's grain. And I think she did. But I think she was a very feminine woman and from what I hear people say – in the last five years there's been fewer around that knew her – but any of the ones that knew her, they all had to say in the end, long after she was dead, that she was a marvellous lady. She couldn't read or write. She went to jail for her husband because he was too chicken to go to jail at one time. And so she did. Here she had these kids and he was caught making moonshine, is the way the family story goes. Like I wish she was around today because I'd like to know, 'What did you feel like?' That's what I'd like to know. I can imagine what she probably felt like because that's what she said in the end. She said, 'I just get tired of making excuses for him, always doing everything for him, so I figured I don't need him, what do I need him for? He's just a yoke around my neck.' And she said, 'The last straw is when he figures he owns me, and decides he's going to give me a licking because he didn't like something I did or said. That was the last straw! I wasn't going to take any of that!' So if we could somehow resurrect her and have her in today's society, she could probably tell us. I think I liked her courage and even though we were kids and she'd talk, you sort of didn't learn one way or the other. But I guess as I grew older and I think the older I get, the more I think about her and I think, 'You know, she had to have been really super because at that time, what was it like?' Okay, I know the little incidents of me trying to drive a bus, what that was like, so you can imagine how people must have spoken of her when she decided to do what she did. And there was no welfare; there was nothing! She had to work hard but she did it. So she had to have had a lot of spirit. I know she did! She died at 89 or something and she still had spirit, to the last days. She fought for whatever she thought of, even when she was sitting in her chair when she could hardly walk anymore. But her mind was active right to the end and she knew what she wanted and she went after it. I guess that's what it takes. If we ever get strong enough, you know, all the women, I'm saying *we, the women* get strong enough to fight for what they want and holler loud enough, that's the only way that change is going to be made.

Theresa seems to have taken for granted or been unconscious, until it was pointed out to her, that she has the same strength of character she admired in her mother and her great-grandmother. She explains:

> I don't know, somebody told me the other day I have a rebellious nature – maybe that's what it is. Because whenever anybody says, 'Bow your heads', I'm usually looking around to see who's bowing and who's not. So I don't know if that's got something to do with it. If they said don't, it gave me more courage to push and hold.

Though Theresa may not have been conscious, as a child, of the attitudes about sexual equality she was learning from her great-grandmother and mother, she did on some level have an understanding of the issue. She describes her reaction to a teacher's unfair treatment of the girls in his class, based on an assumption about the fragility of the female body and the need for girls to be careful about their bodies for the sake of their future husbands.

> I can remember having a teacher somewhere in grade six or seven. He was a math teacher and a very chauvinistic kind of character and really ran girls down, or women down. I remember being really furious with him over a lot of stuff, because it just made me angry and I guess I never ever thought about why. I remember one incident that really stuck in my mind, and stuck in my gullet too I guess. There was kind of a bannister thing down the steps and of course at noon hour that was a no-no because if somebody fell off. But of course if the teacher wasn't around, well the kids had to slide down it. And all the boys went down it so of course all the girls would do the same thing. Well I remember he really made me angry because he called us in after lunch and had caught us at it. He made all the girls stand up and really laid the law about you shouldn't be doing it. But the girls got it more than the boys did and his last remark was 'Someday you're going to be sick, just because you're doing this and then you're going to have all kinds of female troubles and your husband's going to have all the headaches'. No kidding! Someday I almost think I'm going to go back and see him - because he's still around and retired now - and have a good argument with him over that because I've never quite forgotten that - that he would think that it was okay for the boys to do but not for the girls because they might ruin themselves for men, kind of thing. And that was before I knew what he was talking about at that time, but somehow it made me angry. I decided all of a sudden, 'Hey, we're not the culprits here, the boys were doing it too. And even though he's saying, 'Boys, you shouldn't be doing it,' then the girls really got it in the neck, more so than the boys. And I thought that was pretty rotten. Somehow that's very vivid in my mind even though it is so many years ago. It stayed there and I think, 'Well boy, that was pretty nasty!'

Theresa's consciousness of fairness and her strength and determination (or, as she has called it, her rebellious nature) have enabled her to take action, as an adult, on issues important to her. In answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerful?" she first defined what power means to her.

> I have to think about that for awhile. Power, I think, probably means a couple of different things. The first thing that strikes my mind is having your way, or when you decide you want something you fight for it or you do things to make it happen. If you want something very badly or if you want something to happen very badly.

Theresa then relates several incidents demonstrating how she has acted on behalf of herself and others in order to effect change, and in doing so experienced a sense of power. In the first example she describes how she organized a group of women in her community to fight for issues the men were ignoring.

> I can remember one incident in the community where I fought a bunch of men on a recreation board for something I wanted really badly. And they put Don chairman on the recreation board, so that was kind of interesting. He was kind of in a tangle; he was caught between the two so he had to sit real quiet. So I called the women together. Like they were adding on to the recreation center and we wanted a kitchen planned in a certain way because I was always in the kitchen. I guess Don understood what I really wanted but it was hard for him; he was chairman and it was hard for him. He expressed his opinion but it never went. Everybody just poo-pooed it down. So a few of us women really got angry and all started rumbling and saying it was really unfair because we were the ones that probably helped build that thing - sure the men put on a lot of the do's, but if we wouldn't have been cooking all of the banquet dinners and all of that stuff, they wouldn't have had all the money that they did make. So actually we were probably three quarters responsible

> for the building that was coming up. So Don came home from the meeting and I asked him what happened and he said they vetoed whatever we had asked for and said they couldn't give us an outside door – we wanted an outside door from the entrance and that kind of stuff, sinks certain places. So then I said 'Okay, being it's such a controversial thing, let's get a home economist in or somebody unbiased and have them get a plan and do it the proper way and we'll go along if she says that it's not necessary to have an outside door.' But I couldn't see women coming in with hot pots and stuff and going through a crowd when we could have an outside entrance where we wouldn't have to go through a crowd. Because we'd done it so many times we knew that. So Don came home from this meeting and he said, 'No, they just vetoed everything.' So I got mad and in the morning I got on the phone and I phoned all the women up and we organized; we called a recreation meeting. Don stayed home; he didn't go to the meeting, which was probably good. Like it was a grant, a government grant that came for that, so we called the guy who was responsible for this grant, because like it's a recreation board but everybody has their certain thing that they have to do. So we called the fellow up and like he's just a real male chauvinist, this guy. We just laid it out flat. I had about twenty women there and we said, 'Okay, this is what we want.'

Theresa describes the excuses that the men used to avoid giving the women what they wanted and how the women countered with other actions and threats.

> So then they start giving us stupid excuses like, 'Oh, the fire inspector won't allow this.' And so then we said, 'Okay, where is that fire inspector? When you call him to a meeting we want to be there and we won't believe any of that.' So then it came to the point that they said – like it was a $10,000 deal or something and they said they couldn't afford a door. Well, I mean that was just a big joke. So then we all said, all the women, we'd all put five bucks in each, and we'd buy the door if that was the problem. They didn't have a way out and in the end they had to put it in, much to their grumbling.
> So in that sense, like if I really want something badly or want to prove my point I guess I can say that I do have power. I'm not afraid to try and I'll fight it right to the end, if that wouldn't have worked at that meeting. They did decide to put it in and we watched; like we had somebody going in there every day and watching because we said we were going on strike if they weren't going to do it. We weren't going to do any more cooking. Because I said to the women, 'Well then, there's only one way to cure that because let them hire somebody to cater.' I says, 'You know, we've got the power you guys because if we quit, what are they going to do? They can't run their bonspiels and their stuff if we don't go there and continue to cook.' So we told them that. After they started giving us a hard time we said, 'Well that's fine, you don't do it the way we want it, well then you guys find somebody else to do it.' Some of the women went against us – some of the guys' wives. But they were probably the ones that never really helped out either, so I don't think they understood what the problems were. They heard their husbands' side and they stuck with it. But we had enough that were fighting it. I don't think they would have done it; I had to call the meeting and do it myself and then they came. They stuck behind me. Because I said, 'Okay, I'll call the meeting and I'll make them come to a head.' I said, 'If we have to we'll complain to the government or where the grant came from and see if we can make a turmoil there because if they see some turmoil there and start saying they're going to stop the grant, something will happen.' But it didn't have to go that far. But it was a fight.

Theresa explains in the above passage that women who supported the men's position probably did not understand the problems the protesting women were concerned with. In the passage below she explains that, with the exception of her husband, the men did

not understand the nature of the women's concern either.

> You know, the guy that was responsible for the overall workings of this thing – I shouldn't be labelling but I would say he's an alcoholic or close to an alcoholic – he really made me angry because the bar had everything. The men always work in the bar too and at this meeting right away this guy said, 'Well you know you guys think you work so hard and everything, how about us? Look at us?' I said, 'I'll trade you for one meal. You think us women can't go and pick up the liquor at the liquor store and sit there and fill the glasses up? You guys try and prepare the meal. You get together the night before and start rolling cabbage rolls and making the spaghetti sauce or whatever it is we decide to serve and then come in here all day and start with your coleslaw and everything right in the morning and stuffing your turkeys and work until 12 o'clock at night when the last dish is washed.' I says, 'You try that. We'll gladly take over at the bar.' He says, 'Oh, that's not a man's job.' I says, 'No? You think it's a woman's job when we cook spaghetti and we have to lift those big boilers of boiling water to drain the spaghetti when it's cooked?' So after that we had men. It really made me mad and I said, 'Okay, from now on when you guys order a menu, if the menu requires heavy lifting like that, you make sure you have two men in here to lift it for us, because we'll cook it but we're not doing any lifting, because that's not our job either.' So I think it made some of the men aware of what was happening.
> We didn't get everything we wanted that would have been proper, and now I guess you hear people saying, 'Well gee, we should have had this, we should have had that.' And I can say, 'I told you so!' But I had to fight the whole community plus – well Don sort of understood, but what could he do alone? He couldn't really do anything himself. So he just stayed out of there. I'm sure it was really uncomfortable for him.
> Like it was pretty upsetting. Like now I can laugh about it and Don laughs about it too, but he sat pretty quiet because he knew I was mad and he knew too that we'd worked there really hard, us women, so he kind of felt sorry for us. But yet he was afraid to come and he wouldn't sit on any side. He sort of sat on the fence, or just stayed right out of it.

Interestingly, Theresa did not depend on her husband's active support in order to act herself. She speaks about what is involved in her taking such action and contemplates about the nature of the personal power.

> But I don't like that kind of thing. I personally would rather not fight that way. I'd rather talk it over or do it, rather than bringing it to a public thing. But I guess that didn't bother me to get up in a crowd and say what I felt when I was really angry, because we were fighting for something that we wanted to make things easier. We didn't have running water before that, so we struggled with carrying water in. And sometimes you could get a guy to bring you water, but when everybody's busy, I mean the guys are running around doing stuff too, well who thinks about running out to find a guy to do it? You just grab a pail and you go and get it. So I guess when I think about that, I would think I have power if I need to use it, or if I decide to use it. And I know for sure I don't like to get into those kinds of binds. I go to great lengths to avoid that kind of thing. But if forced into it, and if I make up my mind it's right, well then I'll fight till I drop.
> So in that sense I guess I can say – I never think of it as power. Like if I really get put in a corner, well then I'll think about all kinds of ways to fight my way out of it. I've never considered it being powerful, but I guess in a sense when you think about it, it is a kind of power. Because it takes determination I guess to do that kind of a thing.

Theresa describes another incident in which she felt powerful, an incident at work whereby she challenged her boss for something she believed was right.

I guess I go to great lengths to prove my point if I have to. Don says I always have the last word. I think if I really feel something is important to me or for whatever reason, I think I'll do everything in my power to prove it or try and prove my point or bring it through to make somebody see that it is. It's hard for me to think of anything at home. Probably I can think of that more in my working experience. Like John and I have often got into conflicts about budgets and that kind of thing. And like I'm not good at setting up budgets or anything, but I know more or less how many hours we need and how much time. A couple of years ago we were to the point where maybe we were going to run out of money, so what he wanted me to do was cut back on client hours – like take a look at our caseload and maybe cut back, like full days to half days. I thought about that for a couple of days and I said to John, 'Well, how can I go and justify to my clients that we can't serve you?' So John says, 'Well, we'll run out of money.' I said, 'I don't care, I've always wanted a February holiday so if we run out of money in February, fine.' Well, he turned somersaults at that. But for me, far better when you're doing something, do it well and do it for the length of time that you have the money or strength or whatever to do it, rather than do a half kind of job. So John says, 'Well what happens when we run out of money?' And I said, 'Well, then maybe something will happen. Like as far as I'm concerned, why aren't we getting more money for this kind of a program? Maybe then we'll see how vital this program really is in this community. Let some of these clients, if they really figure it's a good thing, let them go to town council, let them go to governments, and let them complain. Somewhere along the line something is going to happen.' Fortunately, that never ever happened. But I'm a strong believer and if it ever came to that again, I'd do the same thing because I think, I don't see any other way. And John says, 'That's crazy!' It wasn't his way of thinking. He says, 'Better to try and keep it going.' And I said, "No! I think if we run out for one month, good. Let it get in the newspaper and on the news and we write to our clients and we tell them, 'We've run out of money. Write letters to your government.'" So I guess in some of those kinds of cases, I fought. Like we'd argue about that for weeks and then I said I wouldn't cut down at all. I said, 'If you want to cut down you go to all my clients and tell them. I'm not going to be the one to say well, you're not getting service because we might run out of money.' And I said, 'We don't know either because the way the budgets are, sometimes you never know. You get one big case and it might knock you for a loop, but if it's necessary, it's necessary. What are you going to do?' So in those kinds of cases I have just fought. If I feel that it's important enough or I am right, well I'll fight. It's not really a good feeling to admit that you've been wrong but I would if it has been proven to me. But we did that for two years or three years in a row and somehow we always came out of it. I feel good about that. And I look back and I think, 'See, that would have been really stupid, because we'd have probably sent the money back. And people probably wouldn't have got the service they should have got and so where would we have gotten?'

A third incident in which Theresa experienced feeling powerful involved her going over her boss's head to the board of directors.

I know some other incidents. I guess the other one was the time I fought John on the secretary thing. That's years ago, when I first started. We had a bad secretary and she wasn't doing her work. There was a lot of stuff that it was affecting. I guess as long as it didn't affect me I sort of kept out of it but when it started affecting me, because she wasn't there on the days John wasn't around or something, well then I started getting angry. I tried to talk to him about it and he just avoided the subject. I think he really felt bad. He knew what had to be done but he didn't have the nerve, or like it was a hard thing to do. I sympathized with him. But then I got in a bind because the other woman in the office left and went to work somewhere else, and I was left alone. And John was gone for two weeks I think. So I always got it in the neck because everybody would always come to me. The town office phoned me about some things that weren't done, AGT called and they were

> going to shut our phones off because she hadn't paid – like that's the kind of stuff we were telling him about and he just let it slide. So then I really got panicky because I thought, 'My God, they could close the phone off! What's this going to sound like? No phones!' And he was still away. I don't know, it was four days or something yet before he was coming back. So I went to the board because I didn't know what else to do. I figured, 'Something's got to come to a head and I'm not going to work in a place if it was going to be run like that.' So I went to one of the board members which was a woman, and then she went to the chairman and then he came to me and he was pretty concerned. But I said like I had gone so many times to John, he hadn't done anything about it and I really didn't feel that good about going to the board, but what else are you going to do? I was in a bind, I had to give some answers to other places because I was left manning the thing. And John was gone so the secretary just took time off and left. So it all came to a head. So then the board was really supportive because they said they would back me. I said, 'I don't know how John is going to look at this kind of thing. I'm sure he isn't going to feel too good about it when he comes back, but I've made up my mind that I don't care if it comes to a point where I have to quit, I will, because I'm not going to continue working under this, the way it's operating right now.' So the board was willing to come when John came in Monday morning, to come in and sit with me when I talked to him, but I said, 'No! Give me the half day. At least let me tell him what I did because it's not a very pleasant thing. But at least he should have the benefit of the doubt where I could go and talk to him.'

Theresa describes her confrontation with her boss – how she behaved and how she felt during the confrontation.

> So first thing Monday morning when he came in I faced him and told him. I knew what would happen when I walked in that room that morning. I knew that the first thing he'd try and do is just tell me, 'Ah, forget it!' And sure enough, like as soon as I started telling him he just started saying, 'Ah, forget it!' and 'She's a damn good secretary!' I says, 'John, I don't want to hear another word from you.' I says, 'All I want is for you to hear me out because I did some things that I'm not very proud of or I'm very happy with.' But I said, 'You definitely have to know because it's going to be affecting you and probably your job.' So I says, 'You'd better sit down here and listen. I don't want to hear another word from you until I am done and then you can tell me whatever you want.' And I said, 'I think you'd better sit down because I don't think you're going to take this standing up.' And I think I was a little wild too. So he did. I don't know what I sounded like. Maybe a little hysterical. I don't think so because I wrote down all the points. I was afraid that if I got flustered or if he starts telling me I'm going to forget some of the stuff. So I wrote everything down and I had it in my pocket. And I never even pulled that piece of paper out. I didn't need it because when I started it just all came out like a record. And I told him right there, I said, 'John, I've done this and I don't feel very good about it but something had to be done.' So then I told him why I did it and I said I didn't have any other way to turn. And then I just told him, 'So many times we tried to talk to you and you wouldn't sit down and listen so like it all came to a head.' So then I told him, 'The town secretary is down on your neck, AGT was going to close the phone down and the whole bit. I had to go to the board. Where else was I going to go? I know that the board is still responsible so it's only right that they know.' And I said, 'Sure if you had been around I woudn't have ever done that and I don't feel very good about doing that because I know that's going over your head, and I don't think that's really right. But the board chairman was going to be in here at 8:30 this morning but I asked them not to because I wanted to be the first one to tell you what I did. So he is going to hold off, but he's coming in at one o'clock.' So poor John, I still get sick – like what it did to him. I know he was having difficulties anyways with a lot of stuff there and at that time he was young and struggling, or much younger I should say, in his ways of thinking and that. And you could see it, like he was just crushed. It just really

made me ill. I told him what I did and then I just kind of left because I figured, 'It's not going to be good.' So I left. I had some work to do and I had all my stuff prepared because I wasn't going to stick around the office after I got done with him. I just picked it up and went to the housing service office and worked there. Then at noon I came back because by that time he'd have a chance to go through all this stuff, because I wrote all of this stuff down that was happening and I said, 'Maybe you'd better check into this.' So he did. I don't know what he did all morning but I guess he checked into all that. And when I came back at noon, his wife was sitting with him so I knew that he had called her because he was probably really upset. She brought lunch and so they were sitting at the back and having lunch. So I thought, 'Well I'd better go and see what's happening.' So when I went to the back and I asked him, 'was it as bad as I had told you?' 'Yeah,' he said, 'it was probably even worse.' And I said, 'Well, it's too bad it had to happen this way.' And I said, 'You know, I don't feel very good about this whole thing either and it makes me sick.' So then the board chairman did come in right after lunch because he said, 'I'll be in at one,' and it all got straightened around. And what I said was right, because I had all the proof. I wasn't lying so I didn't really have anything to worry about, but oh I hate doing that kind of thing. Like I was really upset for a whole week. My stomach was in a knot, I'm sure. But I think in the end, like John said many times that it was really stupid of him and he doesn't even know why he did it, or why he continued – like he should have made it come to a head.

Theresa relates what she gained from the confrontation. She learned that by acting on her beliefs she gained her boss's respect and that consequently he took her seriously. About herself she gained a better understanding of her own power – power that could be destructive if used without consideration or that could change situations for the better. Ultimately, Theresa learned she was capable of using her power and this made her a stronger person.

So then it took about a week, where there were meetings and there were some different things that had to get straightened around. I told him, I said, 'You know John, I prefer to quit because I don't know if you and I can even work anymore after this kind of thing, and rather than having you quit, I'd much rather quit.' But then after a week, I continued to do my thing or whatever, and after they got most of it settled he came back and he said that he hoped that we could still work together. And I said, 'Well, I was willing to try it but I don't know what the atmosphere was going to be like and it certainly wasn't going to be easy.' But I think John's probably respected me for doing all of that in the end. I don't think he was very happy to begin with. And I told him, 'I respect you in a lot of ways John, but you never listen. We've tried to tell you so many times and you didn't want to listen and so this is what has happened. I feel awful for doing it but what was I going to do? I knew darn well it wasn't very good to let them close the phone off so I had to do some lying. And when I had to start doing a little lying for everybody else for no good reason, well then that was it. That's what got my dander up because I thought there's no way I'm going to do that again.' So I guess in a sense, if I really have to – I don't like to plot or I don't like to do that kind of thing, but if I get pushed in a corner where I have to start making excuses for somebody, well then it makes me angry. And I guess I have the power then in the end to do it.

You know what really happened to me there, it was kind of interesting. I'll never forget that feeling. I think it made me stronger, like doing that whole thing. For about two weeks it was really bad. It made me sick – I was literally sick to my stomach. I felt like going and throwing up. I knew then that – probably because the board came up and started asking questions – and I probably knew if I would have wanted to I probably could have

overthrown John or maybe he would even have got fired. And I knew I had the power then. Like I could have said a lot of other things – and you know, it gave me the worst kind of a feeling. I didn't like that. It kind of made me ill. I don't know, it was really strange. But I didn't feel good about it. I knew then, like you get that feeling that you have the power to do if you chose to do something – like if I wanted to get even or whatever, I had the power. It didn't make me feel good that I sort of tramped on the secretary's toes either, but I still don't feel bad about that because I don't think she should have been working. She was a girl, in a sense, and I don't think she should have been there to begin with. But that was beside the point. But afterwards I found out a lot more and like I knew that I could have probably destroyed a whole lot. So then like I had to crawl in my corner and sort of sit and think things out, because all of a sudden you figure, 'Gee, like one little move and there could be a lot of things happening, a lot of changes.' I knew that John had a good heart in the end and that he was good. He was really good for the community. And if it came to quitting I would rather quit than have him quit. That's not saying maybe somebody else couldn't have come in and done as good a job, but I think there were a lot of things that he was really good for in this community and I didn't want that destroyed. I guess when I thought it all over and I thought, 'If I ever had to do anything like that again, I learned a lot of stuff from that.' And I don't think to this day that I'd ever feel good or that I could ever live with the fact that, even if somebody really made me angry, that you could destroy them. Like I think what would have happened if John would have ever lost his job or that? It probably would have really destroyed him. He probably would have survived, he'd have went somewhere else or something, but I don't think I would have felt good about it. So then I knew from that, the directions I would have to go if it ever come to a thing like that again. But then I knew it was much easier, after I had faced him. Like I had no idea what the music was going to be like when I told him what happened. I thought, 'Okay, it could be that he fires me too, because he is my boss in fact,' although I had the board behind me. But then after the whole incident I started thinking, 'The next time that happens or the next time I would get in a bind like that, I would know.' Because I didn't know. I was sort of going from pillar to post and I knew what I should be doing, but I didn't have a clue what was going to happen, even though I went to the board. It was an experience, because the first time you're faced with anything like that, I don't think you really realize that you'd have that kind of power, to maybe have your boss fired or whatever. It's not good at all.

But I know I probably handle stuff in a different manner now. I've learned from that, that if I do have a problem with anything I'll – but John will also listen to me, where he didn't want to listen before. That's the other thing. So he's probably learned from that thing too, I'm sure. Or maybe it's more the way I deal with the problem now. I don't know what it is, but I know he sits and listens. I think it probably surprised him. He probably didn't figure I was ever capable of anything like that, I don't think. Heaven knows, I don't know what he thought. I guess I didn't know I was capable of that either. Because I knew where my weaknesses were before. I knew that he probably would try and belittle me or try and do something. I had enough time to prepare myself so I backed myself up in where I thought if he ever got me, well this is what I would do then, in case I forgot or he got me off track. So I wasn't sure that I was going to let him have it. I thought, 'I'm gonna have to prove my point, that's for sure.' So I was ready. I had all these other back–up things, little things where I thought, 'Well gee, it's not going to be very good to go in there and start struggling because you forgot something or you can't remember something.' So that's why I wrote it all down. It still amazes me to this day that I never ever had to pull that piece of paper out because I remembered everything and probably more than I wrote down even. It was a real speech. I think for about 20 minutes I probably talked.

Contemplating the issue of power, Theresa recalled her first experience of understanding her own power.

> I can't remember what the incident was, but I remember when I defied my mother – that was probably when I was about 12 or 13. Mom would say, 'You can't do this' and 'You can't do that.' And all of a sudden I discovered that really if I decided to go ahead and do it, what could she do about it? When I stop and think about it, I guess that was the first time that I felt that it was a power and I defied her. It never really occurred to me when we were talking but I just started thinking, 'There must be more to power than that.' And then when I started thinking, I thought where I first started, and I started thinking back to my lifetime and I thought, "Yeah, remember the first time I decided, 'Why do I always have to listen to what my mother tells me?' There must be some other way."

She also commented on a common situation involving power, and her understanding that a component of personal power is self–confidence – the ability to effect a situation with an attitude or a belief in what you are doing.

> You know, sometimes you meet a person, and I've done it a lot I know, and that's the thing of looking at a person and making them look away. Or making them sometimes do things with a smile, you know, like with the kind of attitude you use towards a certain kind of a problem and what that does. Sometimes by laughing you can get away with murder or by maybe not doing very much but smiling, and you can change the whole focus of something. It won't work always but there's an odd situation – whether it would be in an argument or whatever. And I think it's just the whole way you deal with it. Or looking somebody straight in the eye and seeing if you can make them shrink or look away. Like I've done it sometimes and I know I'm doing it. I'll do it for a purpose. Like maybe there's this great big guy and he's trying to tell you something and if you just stare him straight in the eye and you make him look away you know darn well he's not as strong as he's putting on he is. You know what I mean? And I don't care if it's an argument over some political thing or whatever; it might be just a friendly argument. But an odd time I've used it and I guess I figure if it works I tend to use it again. And there's some situations you just know. So those were the two things I was thinking about. I never thought about them right away when we were talking, and then afterwards I started thinking, 'Well, that's power.' I guess it's a self–confidence. Like if you make up your mind and you sit there and say, 'I dare you' kind of thing. And ten–to–one, if you're sure enough of what you're doing, the other person is not going to cross you or they're not going to try you in most instances.

Asked "What do you value about yourself?", Theresa again admitted she had never really thought before that she was rebellious. She was able, however, to reflect how being rebellious was useful because she never feels restricted.

> About being rebellious, I don't know. I guess I never ever thought about it until somebody pointed that out to me one day. I mean my husband says it every once in a while but husbands always have a way of trying to say some things. But I've never ever thought about it really. When I think about it now, I think it's probably a good attitude. It's probably gotten me out of a hole or a bind that I would have gotten myself into if I wasn't of that nature. I think it's good because I don't ever feel restricted. Because if I've really put up my mind to do something, I'll do it or I'll certainly give it a good shot. It's different from questioning, because I may question for the reason of just wondering why I'm going to do it. Then okay, if it comes to where somebody says, 'Well, you have to do something,' that's when I, if there's not any good reason for it, well that's where I may start rebelling. I think I would question anything, good, bad or otherwise. I wouldn't go out of my way to be rebellious but if it was something I think that's really important to me, if I need to be rebellious I sure will be. I guess that's a weapon, maybe. I don't know.

There is another aspect of herself that Theresa has been largely unconcious of, and which she has just come to realize is valuable – that she is questioning. She explains:

> I guess mainly I see myself, at least I think that's how I am, as somebody that's warm and outgoing and can understand or listen well. I like that. Someone might have some other ideas. It was interesting because my boss said the other day, I was always questioning, and I thought that was an interesting observation because I never seen myself as that. I always thought I was quiet, even though I had a rebellious nature. I know somebody's told me that and I guess when I think about it I do have. But he said I've never taken anything he's always after me to do, I've never taken it sitting down – I want to know why it has to be done. And I never thought of that. I always thought I oftentimes did things too quickly without questioning enough. So that was really interesting when he made that comment. Because I thought, 'Oh really?' He says, 'I don't think I've ever asked you to do anything that there hasn't been a why to it, and I've had to sit down and explain because you're not about to do anything if you don't know the reason behind it.' But I don't think I've ever seen myself as that, even thinking about it more now. So I checked that out with my husband to see and he says, 'Yeah, he's dead right.' And I value that. I don't think there's anything bad about that. I think there is a lot of good in that because I think you probably don't get yourself into corners or hot boxes if you think that way. If you've always got the question ahead of why you're doing something, I think it's going to be a heck of a lot easier to do it, because you know why you're doing it, and you already know the pros and cons of it or have some sort of an idea what might happen. But I think if you don't question, and I guess any time I make a decision I have a whole lot of questions, to myself even – why? what? how? So that's something new I learned about myself just within the last two weeks.

The qualities in herself which Theresa more consciously values are being warm, outgoing, caring and understanding. She explains how having an open mind and wanting to learn make genuine caring and understanding possible.

> About being warm and outgoing and understanding, I think when you're a caring person, or you think about someone else maybe even sooner than you do about yourself, I think it makes you feel good to do something for someone. It's like buying a gift; there's more value in giving than in receiving sometimes. I think you have a broader view of a lot of things. I think you see people and you see things in a broader way, like you can understand easier why people do things or why certain things happen. I think I feel better personally and I'm a more interesting person. I think you're always looking or searching or learning – you never cease learning. Like I don't think there's a person – well I guess I would say I probably have a few dislikes or people that I just can't stand, but they're very, very few. It has to be something really grave before I can really say, 'Well gee, I just cannot stand that person.' Whether it be an old person, a young person or someone my age or whatever, I think it's interesting to see how people view things, how they see things and what they think about things. Whether it's the same way I think or not, I can appreciate how they're feeling or what they're thinking. And I think if I didn't have that kind of a personality I probably couldn't do what I'm doing. I'd be different, certainly. As long as you've got an open mind you're going to learn. If you ever decide that you have all the answers or you're 100 percent right you won't learn anymore. Like we talked about values. I have certain values and I know why I feel that way and why it's good for me. It might not necessarily be good for anyone else.

Part of Theresa's understanding of people is understanding how the circumstances of their lives affect them and how, contrary to what she perceives many professionals to

believe, people cannot change their situations just because they want to. She gives an example demonstrating the positive effects of her understanding.

> And I think I can understand why people do certain things, why they react to a certain situation they way they react. Why the circumstance are around them the way they are is because of certain reactions or the way they think or whatever. I guess I can't be of the opinion, which I have heard so many professionals and social workers and that put to the point, that everybody can change if they want to. I've seen people really want to change, but it's very difficult to change. I think there's a lot of things: there's background, there's circumstances, there's pride, there's all kinds of things that get in the way and affect why they're doing or why they're living like they are living. An example I'm thinking of is a single parent mother that was left with four kids. Her husband left her and she wouldn't accept welfare. We had someone going in for the longest time and this mother kept saying that she had enough to get by on and nobody had to bother her. Finally, after about six months of working with her we finally figured out what was wrong. She'd land in the hospital with a nervous breakdown kind of thing, every time she ran out of food. And how we discovered that was one night she passed right out, went into blackness, partly I think because maybe she hadn't eaten for awhile. We suspect that because she's never admitted that. And the other thing was because she was really, really worried and there was nothing, absolutely nothing to eat in that house. And she was too proud: she went through all kinds of contortions to try and steer us the other way until finally someone called me and said, 'This is what's happened. So we put our heads together and started thinking about all the different times that happened and it was always around the end of the month time. Either the cheque hadn't come through or – there was a pattern to it. And sure enough, the cupboard was bare, fridge was bare and there was absolutely nothing. So then we said, 'What a horror!' She had four hungry kids, probably crying because they were so hungry. So then I went to see her and I said, 'Okay, this is what we think. You tell us if you think we're wrong,' because she wasn't telling us anything. Obviously she couldn't talk about it. So I said, 'We may be dead wrong, but if we look back to what happened before and to last night what happened and what's in your house, we have to start suspecting that this is what's wrong.' And she started to cry and she said 'Yeah!' And then we were able to convince her to go on welfare. And that was really funny because we went to see the worker and the worker said, 'You know this is really interesting because I've never worked on a case like this. It's always we're trying to get them off of welfare. Here we're trying to convince her that this is the right thing for her.' Because it was; she really needed it. She was afraid; she was afraid because her husband told her if she ever put his kids on welfare he was going to come and beat her up; she wasn't to contact a social worker about any of this kind of stuff. So then it was easy; it all fitted in– why this aloof attitude. Like sometimes she just didn't want to talk and we figured, 'Well, she's spaced out,' but she wasn't. That was her way of putting us off. She did a very good job at it too. So she felt like as long as she acted that way or in that manner, we weren't going to ask too many questions, or it was okay for her not to bother answering us to giving us any straight answers. But when we guessed, she fell right in; she couldn't say no. So I think if I wasn't the kind of person I am, I probably wouldn't be able to see some of those things, because even the worker was taken aback. It was a man and I must say a very good social worker. If I ever needed a social worker I would hope that it would be one with that kind of understanding. He was taken aback when I phone him and I said 'Look, I think this is what is happening.' He says, 'Are you sure?' So then I explained why we thought that and I said, 'I'm going to go up and face her up to it.' She was really afraid of him; she wouldn't talk to him at all. When she came out of the hospital she finally decided, yes, she was going to go and apply for welfare and thumb her nose at her husband if she had to. So then we told her about all the protection there would be if he ever did try to beat her up because who

knows, maybe he would have. We pointed out for her, 'Is it worse for your kids to be on welfare and have full stomachs or is it better for them to be running around and stealing stuff out of the grocery stores? Like which one is better?' She still didn't have the nerve to go and apply for welfare, but asked if I could go with her. So I went and sat through the whole thing because she had it built in her mind that this was such a terrible thing that she was going to have to go and fill this form up to qualify for assistance, and she just couldn't go through it alone. So I did. But I think a lot of people would maybe be exasperated with that kind of an attitude. But I felt for her. I knew what she was. Like a lot of people said, 'Well, she's crazy, she's not thinking right, she's putting all this on to be noticed,' and that. But that wasn't true! And I never ever felt that way. I always felt like she did have a lot of good qualities. She had some things that were just really good. So I think maybe by being that kind of person you can see deeper or see some things past the person you're looking at kind of thing.

Balancing the intensity involved in questioning, rebelling, caring for and understanding others is Theresa's ability to laugh – another quality in herself that she values.

> And I value maybe my sunny–side nature. I think I can laugh easily – like I can always see the sunny side to whatever. And I think even with a client or with anyone in trouble, there's always something funny or humorous about every situation. I think I like that. I think when you've gone down as far as you can go every once in a while, it's really good to laugh. I think even at home oftentimes it works. I think of when I get tired, when I get really, really tired, is when I really feel silly. And sometimes it's really good to just laugh. Your husband or somebody will try and pinpoint you to some kind of a decision, and all you want to do is sit and laugh because you really don't want to make any or think any further as to what else are you going to do. I'm sure it exasperates the other person. I've done that to John too. But I think that's better than crying. It really frustrates me and I went through some times there where I had to cry a lot. It really made me angry because I think you never got anywhere crying. I think you can get far further with a laughing attitude than you can with a crying one.

Also adding balance to Theresa's active, involved work and life are the things she likes to do alone – sewing, handicrafts, knitting, crocheting, a walk in the countryside – things which take her mind away from the daily stresses, and which give her time to collect her thoughts. In partial answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" she stated:

> Okay from there I think I'd go down to some of the personal things I like doing. Like I know it's important for me every once in a while to be by myself, and I love sewing so I'll pick up a difficult pattern and try and make something creative. I have a sister that hates sewing. Whenever I'm home, maybe on a day I'm sick or something, I'll go down to my sewing room and I'll sew. She'll come in and she'll say, 'How can you do that? That would be the last thing I'd want to do when I'm sick.' But to me, unless I'm flat on my back and can't get out of bed, I can go down there and just really get busy. I like handicrafts. I like doing a lot of knitting and crocheting and that kind of thing. That for me is kind of a tranquilizer kind of thing. I can get myself involved in trying to figure out a pattern and getting it made, so it did lots for me. So I think it's important for me to have some time to myself. I can go for days where I haven't got an hour for myself and then all of a sudden, 'Aaaaggghhh!' Okay, I need some time, whether it's a walk by the lake to the end and sit for two hours or what. That's probably the next thing. If I didn't have that time, I think I couldn't continue. Somehow, somewhere I have to stop and take a breath, or stop thinking, collect myself. Something I sort of dream about, and

> I don't know if it will ever materialize, but is maybe having a little log cabin way out in the end of our farm, somewhere at the lakepoint where it's beautiful white sand. Somewhere I could just go, where there's no telephone. Nobody would be able to find me because I could walk up there and nobody would know I'm there. And I could just sit there for two, three hours and collect my thoughts. I'll do that often. I'll go for a walk with my dog and sit on the sand or whatever and just sit there for awhile. If I get a migraine headache, that's what I'll do. Because that probably helps me more than trying to sleep it off or whatever. That comes quite high on the list of what's important to me, that I need to be with me, myself, every once in a while. I think if I didn't have the time to do that every once in a while, I probably wouldn't be any good to my family either. So I don't know where that comes in. Both are fairly important and maybe one goes with the other. But I guess I'm my own person and if I start feeling that I haven't got time to sort this out or that out, then I'll really start panicking. I need some time every once in a while. And I would say that's because I'm a slow thinker. My boss tries to push me and I'll say, 'Well John, you know I just think slowly sometimes. I don't like doing things in a hurry.' I know sometimes you have to think quick, there's a quick decision in certain areas. That's not saying because you think it over well that you can't make a mistake, but somehow I just feel more comfortable being able to weigh the pros and the cons of whatever it is, whatever decision, big or small. Some need more thinking than others do.

At the beginning of the interview Theresa described how she took over her husband's jobs as a school bus driver and as manager of their farm when he was ill. She mentioned that she did not hesitate to run the farm because she knew what to do and felt like a partner in the marriage. That Theresa's marriage is a healthy relationship for her, that she feels an equal partner, and that her marriage is central to her life is validated by her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> That's probably an easy one I think because I've thought about it often and at times I guess I've had to make some decisions. I think I value my marriage probably the most. Like I think even though I started to go to work and I knew that that was going to have some effects on our family life, I guess if it came to either marriage or career, I'd probably throw the career over my shoulder. I would feel badly about it but if it came to a choice I would probably choose that. I guess I just find being married as being a good thing. We enjoy doing things together, whether having a good argument or going out to a good movie or whatever. I think just being able to share a whole lot of my life with someone else is what's really important probably to me. And having someone that I think understands me fairly good.
> But I guess I would still, like if it came to anything where Don would decide that for some reason it wasn't good because I was working, I would weigh it out and I don't know what decision I'd make, but I think I would give up my job rather than giving up a marriage. Sharing my life is very important to me. And I think Don is very different from me. Okay we enjoy doing a lot of things together, but he's got a whole different attitude than I have, I think, towards life. But I think that's good. Where I tend to be maybe a lot of times more serious, take things more seriously than he does, I think that's really good because oftentimes I get too serious and then I think he can sort of pull me back and say 'Hey!'

While Theresa values her marriage above her career, she also expects to come first with her husband.

> And I guess, I don't know, I guess I've often talked with women who have come to me where their husbands have been running around or something and they say, 'Well how would you feel?' I say, 'I don't know but I know for sure that I have to be number one in whatever I'm doing.' I want to do a good job in whatever I do and I guess I feel that way about my marriage too. I guess if all of a sudden I found out I wasn't number one, I'd sure as hell do something about it – find out why. I don't know what would happen in that case. I think it has to happen before you really know what you would do. The only thing I want to know is that I am first for Don and that's it. And any time I ever get the feeling that I'm not, well he's got a few questions to answer and he'd better answer them in a hurry. I don't think I could ever share him with anybody else. And I know there's other interests he has and that kind of thing, and I think that's important. But I think in the personal relationship we have, I have to be number one and that's it. I couldn't accept him running around. Or if I had even half a doubt that there was something going on, well I'd hop in my car and find out; or follow him or find out for myself. Like if anybody ever said anything and if I got a little suspicious, I guess I'd certainly check that out. I guess I'd have to know, because I have certain ideals of what I think my marriage should be like and I guess if it's not or if I got a funny feeling that something was happening, well then I would really want to know what is happening and why it's happening and when it has happened and whatever. He'd have to answer some questions in an awful hurry and have some good logical explanations, I think. I don't know. It may be totally different. I guess I think my marriage is quite secure or I look at it as a secure part of my life, and if all of a sudden it wasn't I don't know what effect – I really don't know what would happen.

The security Theresa now feels in her marriage was not always there, however. She describes a rough time they weathered involving her mother-in-law.

> Like we've had some rough times and I know to begin with, Don's mother was a very prominent kind of a lady and very domineering. She raised four sons and had no daughters. Like she was a real difficulty in our life. I guess if there would have been anything that ever stood over it, it would have been because of her. But we weathered that; we went through that, sort of all underground, and when she learned where her position was, it was quite all right. But that was probably the hardest part in the marriage for me. Probably because I was very young. Like if it was now I think I could deal with it a whole lot easier, but that's probably because I have a lot of knowledge of what's happened. It's easier to deal with something after, when you look back on it.

That this was truly a difficult time in their marriage is validated by Theresa's answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?"

> Okay, resentment. I guess I can put it to a point of probably mother-in-law interference. Like I guess I'm able to cope with it, but a lot of times it's very hard to forget some of the hurtful things that were done. And I think if it comes to resenting something that strongly, like I have to really get hold of myself and think about a lot of things, or I think I'd fly off the handle or be really angry about some things. And I wouldn't be able to cope in the situation. I guess what I thought about my marriage was that the wife, as I say, I want to be number one. And if my husband and myself make a decision to do something and all of a sudden here comes the third party and changes that all around – like it can happen once, it can happen twice, and maybe I don't like it, but I'll accept it. But pretty soon, like I start to get a funny feeling that there's something wrong here and I'm not going to take this anymore. So then I'm going to do something about it – talk about it or holler and scream or whatever it takes to change it. But I guess that the resentment part is that I think she hated to let go of her son. I can accept it and I can laugh about some of the stuff now quite easily, but I guess in a sense I still

> resent. And I don't think that will ever change, whether I'm standing at her graveside or whatever. I think there's some things she did that are unforgiveable or unpardonable maybe. Not unforgiveable, unpardonable, in my books. I think the control was the worst part. But like we were in a bind because of the family farm thing and the whole business of – like things would have been a lot different if we'd have been away from there and Don had had a different kind of a job. But because we were farming, it was controlled with finances, it was controlled with all kinds of things, time, even. Like it was really frustrating because we'd decide we were going to do something one day, and then she comes up with this bright idea and all of a sudden she plans things and everything falls apart. When that first started to happen, 'Well, gee, it's sad.' The second time, 'Well how come everytime we decide to do something this happens?' The third time, 'Well this is exasperating; this is a pattern.' So then you start fighting it out. And it's a battle! And I guess it hurts when it comes to the point where you have to say, 'Okay it's either me or her!' Or the manipulative way that she always managed to do things. At first she was having difficulties to let him go because Don was the second in line and I know there were a lot of problems with the first boy that left. I know his wife had all kinds more difficulties than I even had. Don was a little older and I think he was able to handle her a lot better. I know now, he says if it was now, he'd even handle it in much better ways, but of course as you get older, you get smarter. But like it really makes you feel bad when you have to start defending yourself and I think after awhile you start resenting that. It gets to be a big hurt. I think we were able to talk it out and work that out. But when I think about it I guess I think that was probably the worst thing that could ever happen, is her interference in our marriage. Like everything else that I can think about was really good. Even the hard times we had or whatever, it was good. But I guess I really get angry because I think that wasn't necessary. Like we didn't have to go through those times. That's what really makes me angry.

Theresa believes that with experience we learn how to better cope with problems that arise in marriages. She talks about what she believes is necessary for a good marriage and how she and her husband have strived for common goals. She contemplates what marriage breakdown would mean to her.

> I think in today's society or today's world even, a good marriage is like having a good company or like a good partnership. Like you have to be equal partners in it, otherwise I don't think it can work, or it can't work very well. It might work, but better for one person than the other. And that's not good. It's got to be good for both. So I see what we have today, I guess maybe because we lived so poor years ago, and I can remember how my mom and dad struggled and that whole thing. I guess security to me is having a good warm house to live in, enough to eat and having someone to share it with, that's really important. And I guess it's been important to Don too, because we've strived in that direction to get ourselves something comfortable to live in and live where we enjoyed living, where it's at now, because we could have either lived in town or whatever. So we both worked for that home kind of thing. Like what we talked about before marriage or in the first years of our marriage, we knew what kinds of things we wanted, and so I think that would really be shaking the floor if something happened. Because all of a sudden I know what a split-up would mean. It would mean breaking up your property and breaking up the whole – all of a sudden you wouldn't be financially secure, there would be a whole lot of changes. But I guess I couldn't sit back either and say that because I am financially secure I'm going to accept this kind of thing. So if something did go haywire . . . .
> Marriage also means to me though, just going home at night and having somebody to share your daily troubles or triumphs with and that kind of thing; exchanging ideas and maybe sharing stuff that you've learned today or heard about or whatever. I think that's really important. And I think someone

> alone, you'd have to devise something else. You'd either find a very good friend or someone, and maybe some people can cope with it alone. I think I like to talk about stuff at the end of the day.

Theresa first commented that she enjoys being a woman and that she doesn't feel restricted – that she learned as a child, from her mother and great-grandmother, that women do not have to accept society's or men's definition of them and their 'proper place', and that she has acted on her beliefs as an adult. Theresa also enjoys being a woman in a physical, sensual sense – what she describes as being 'feminine.'

> But like I enjoy being a woman. I enjoy somebody opening the door for me or paying for my meal. I enjoy being flattered by a male. I've got all the, I think, feminine kinds of feelings. Like getting in a car, if there's a man I just assume they drive, even though I can drive. But it just never occurs to me then. To me that means, I guess, them just recognizing that I'm feminine, or that they respect me for myself. I enjoy being feminine. Like I enjoy putting on a frilly blouse or that kind of thing.

Central to Theresa's notion of enjoying being a woman in a sensual or 'feminine' sense, is her idea that she wants to be respected as a woman, not in spite of being a woman, but for the *person* she is, part of that being the *woman* she is. In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" Theresa struggles with this idea, and it becomes clearer as she continues to talk about it.

> Respectability is the second highest thing I value, whether you're respectable to men or peers or whoever. I guess that's probably quite important to me – respecting me for the person I am, seeing some value in the kinds of things I do, the kind of person I am or whatever. I think that's why I really get upset if some guy makes some crude advances. That upsets me because then I think, 'Well how are they seeing me?' I guess that's not how I really want to be seen, because I think I have a little more to offer than just one part. How can anyone see anything in a person if the first thing they think about is making some sort of advance? And I guess, as a woman, I don't even think of it that way, but it's just that they're not respecting me for my values, my feelings. And if they can't understand how I feel, well then I really just don't have anything in common with this person. Because I think every person to me, I don't care if it's a child, an adult, an old person or someone that's really depressed or what, everyone has something that they have to offer and there's something good about everyone, I think. Or something that's outstanding; I shouldn't say good, I mean something outstanding, an outstanding feature. I guess maybe it just makes me sick if I think, 'Well, they don't see me in any other way.' Okay, I'm maybe not perfect in everything, I'm sure I'm not, but there must be something that I do well or that I should be able to be of some value, so that they can see me in some other way. And even if I have to work at it for awhile to gain that – like what's happened in my job. When I started working, because of my educational background, I know that my boss said – he told me point blank – we often laugh about it now – but he figured I couldn't do the job. And that was okay; I could accept that kind of thing. I knew how he felt and that gave me all the more courage to struggle harder and show him what I thought. And I guess I could accept it for a time, that he was seeing me that way, and I thought, 'Well, that's okay. I'll prove my point if it takes me five years to do it. I'll do it eventually.' That was my goal. And I guess I really feel good about that because he's had to change his way of thinking. He said so openly and we've laughed about it. We always go out for a drink on my anniversary of when I started. So one

day he was telling me what he was thinking and I said, 'Okay, tell me the truth.' So then I said, 'But you know what? Do you really want to hear what I thought of you?' So then I told him what I thought of him. So we've come to good terms with it. I've had my battles with him, but if I know something is right, or if I really believe strongly in something, I'll go to the ends of the world to prove it. And I guess if I'm wrong, I'll admit that. It's, I'm sure, a little harder to admit you're wrong than to try and prove or say I told you so. I think it makes me feel really good, to be able to prove my point and in the end have him say, 'Well I value your opinion; I respect the way you think,' or whatever. I think that's quite important.

I certainly want to be respected as a woman as well. I don't want every guy coming and pawing me, so that's really important. But if he likes what he sees, he can certainly tell me that without putting his fingers on me. I guess I have said that to some. If you really feel that way I take kindly to your telling me so, but hands off, kind of thing. I guess I want the person to see me as a woman, and as a woman recognizing that I am a female and not a male, right? But I also want them to see that I have some other qualities. I shouldn't say some other qualities because being feminine isn't a quality, you're either male or female. So I don't know quite how to explain that. I want them to know that I'm a female and to recognize that. I don't know how to put it in words. Recognizing that I am a female and that I have all of these qualities. I guess just seeing you as a person, seeing me as being me, able to do some things because of the kind of a person I am. But what does being feminine mean to me? That's a hard question. I don't know if I ever dwell on that. Like I said, I enjoy being a woman and being feminine. I enjoy having a door opened for me or I enjoy a compliment or that kind of thing, but that's as far as I've ever thought of being a woman. When someone opens a door for me, I think it shows respectability. I see so much today with the young girls, where the guy will come in and sit on the chairs and the girls are left standing with no chairs left, and I think that's terrible. So it's probably all the old stuff that's been instilled in me of where women should be respected or this was the kind of thing guys should do. Not that I've ever held my husband to the point where he has to open the door for me. In fact I'd feel foolish sitting inside the car waiting for him to get out and run around and open the door. But I think if we're walking together and we come to a door, he should be the one that opens it. But I'm not going to sit in a car when he's getting out, to wait till he gets around, because I'm certainly capable of opening a door and closing it myself.

Theresa is concerned that the equality women have achieved today does not mean that they are equally respected or valued. She wants both: to be respected for her skills and abilities, and as a woman.

I think there is in a sense a lot of disrespect today of women. Almost more, in a sense. I think we're coming up in our jobs, and that's all coming up for equality, but I'm wondering if on the other hand we're losing the other kinds of things, like where guys just are not respecting women in some of the other areas, such as pulling out a chair or sitting down on a seat and letting her stand. And I guess to me it seems like something is lost, like the women are losing in that respect. And I'm not sure, I don't think I can believe that men are seeing us as equals because they're doing that. To me I guess it means that they're really not respecting the girlfriend or their dates or whatever, like they should do. I don't know if that makes any sense. As I say, because we gain here, maybe we're losing there. There has to be something more to it. I think what's happening is the men figure, 'Okay you guys, you think you're so smart you can do this.' Rather than seeing you as a woman and recognizing that because you're a woman you still can do a whole number of things and because you're a woman you don't need any less to live on, you're going to need the same amount of money we do to operate a family or whatever. See

> I think that if we force them into that role, of thinking that way, then they are still not looking at us as equal – they figure they're going to get even with you somehow. I think it's like they've sort of had the upper hand and they're going to continue it. It's like a spoiled child where you say, 'Okay, you can't do this.' If he finds out he really can't or he may get into trouble, then he'll go and do something else behind your back sort of, to get even with you kind of thing. That's what it looks like to me. Because I think the way I would like to be respected as a female would be that they recognize my qualities, that I can do this and this and this well, or as well as any man or maybe better than some men, and that I can think logically, I've got my own ideas and I've got a right to them, but that I am still a woman and they should enjoy being with me because I'm feminine or whatever just like I enjoy being with a man for different reasons.

Theresa goes on to explain the attraction to the opposite sex that she experiences. Recognition of her femaleness by a male indicates to her that he acknowledges the attraction – her femininity.

> I think maybe opposites attract. Even though I enjoy women – like I have a real good friend and I really enjoy her company, being able to share things with her and talk with her, I really enjoy it. And Don's got a couple of good men friends that I really like and respect, and I really enjoy having a challenging conversation with them as well. Whatever it is – politics or growing a rose or whatever the interest is – I enjoy to get their view of how they think or what they think. I don't know. Maybe I am subconsciously thinking that they're male; maybe I've seen them different and I sort of want to know their views. And I think I enjoy being recognized as a female. Like you're struggling with something for example, and either my husband comes along or some other person and he says, 'Oh gee, let me do that for you. You're not strong enough.' And I don't mean *strong*, but that must be hard for you or whatever, *physically* hard. I think, 'Gee, that's really nice.' I really appreciate that kind of thing because he's recognizing that it must be really difficult because I haven't the strength to do it. And I guess it really annoys me when you have some of these guys that say, 'Go ahead, struggle with it lady,' and they sit back and relax awhile. They have to recognize that being courteous would be recognizing that maybe you have certain strengths or maybe you can only do that much, and give you a helping hand. Just like when some guy was having a hard time changing his baby's diaper or whatever and I said, 'Gee, maybe you want me to help you with that.' There are some things that I do well, better than some men, like okay, I'm probably better at washing Don's shirts than he is. But he is a heck of a lot better at checking the oil in the car and when my tire's flat, changing it. Why should I struggle with it? But I guess I would feel awkward or foolish sitting there waiting for him to open the car door when I've got two perfectly good hands and legs and can do it myself, because he has to walk all the way around the car. I guess part of it is being recognized as an attractive female – as feminine. I've never thought about it that far, just that I know I enjoy having that kind of thing happen to me. And I guess that would be the answer, the logical thing. I'm thinking, 'Okay, they're recognizing, they're respecting.' Maybe I put that respect in the wrong place. For me to feel feminine I guess I want somebody to recognize that I'm a female – that would be being feminine – but also recognize that I'm not totally dumb because I'm a female. Like the inclinations of, 'She's just a dumb broad.' I really bristle at that kind of thing. Just because you're a female, why do you have to be dumb? There's a lot of dumb males walking around too, so I don't think that's got anything to do with being a male or a female.

Going back to her childhood, we see how Theresa's awareness of her sexuality developed. Generally speaking, Theresa recalls a childhood free of restrictions and free

of the notion that being a girl meant anything different from being a person.

> When I was younger I can't remember having feelings about being a girl even though we were all girls in the family. Somehow I never ever even thought. I had cousins that were boys and we often were together – played together, and stayed at their place or other kids stayed in our place. And like if the boys climbed a tree, I climbed a tree too. I enjoyed playing with dolls, which the boys probably didn't, but it never occurred to me that I was different or I was a girl and that's why I was doing it or anything.

However, Theresa notes a change in her awareness of herself at puberty, stemming from a sense about her mother's uncomfortable feelings about her developing sexuality. How her mother's feelings were transmitted, where they came from and how her mother attempted to compensate for them is explained.

> But when I began to change into a woman, that was probably a difficult time, I guess partly because of how it was handled. Like I think my mom was really embarrassed to talk to me about it because of the way she was brought up. Like now we often talk about it and she says because I was the first child in the family she was sort of using me. I think it wasn't as difficult for her later as it was at that time. I think she just briefed me on the most necessary things. I remember her saying, 'Gee I really have to talk to you this afternoon.' And I thought, 'My goodness! This sounds important!' But I had no idea what it was all about. I think the stage must have been set because all of a sudden my sister was gone and there was nobody around the house. I remember her sort of stuttering and stammering and trying to fill me in on all what it was she was supposed to try and tell me. It was a very brief description of what was going to happen. I picked up that, 'Gee she's really uncomfortable about this'. So then I just took it from that that this must be an uncomfortable business. But I accepted it and then she went on to tell me about what had happened to her and she didn't want to have that happen to me. Because like her mother never even told her anything, so she got a big surprise and she was scared that there was something wrong and wasn't prepared. And in the old days you didn't have all the convenient stuff that we have now for that kind of thing. So I remember her telling me how terrible it was because it was embarrassing and here she was looking for old towels and things, and how scary it was because then they'd have to hide all this and have to rewash it. And she never really learned about that from her mother, so she made up her mind right there that there was no way she was going to let her girls go through that kind of thing. She told me that right at the time. That's the way she felt, but she was really uncomfortable telling me about it. This was before, so she was trying to prepare me. Okay and I think she did a good job of that but I think later that she really didn't tell me too much more.

Although Theresa's mother did not provide her with complete information about female sexuality, she does appear to have encouraged her to get this information from a close neighbour – a woman who seems to have been both a friend and model for Theresa.

> We had some good friends – like they were a young married couple and sort of lived on my dad's yard. I became very friendly with this lady and she was probably like a guiding star, because I think she filled me in on all the rest eventually. Maybe it was a set–up – that Mom had planned it that way. I don't really know. But she sort of took me under her wing and told me a whole lot more. We could really talk about it, even though she had no kids of her own – they were just married maybe four or five years. But she was fairly young and I related well to her because I liked her and she was still young enough that we could do foolish things together. So somehow it was almost like she

was a friend of mine or a school chum of mine, so we were able to talk.

Having an aunt to go to for understanding support when in conflict with her mother also appears to have been important for Theresa.

> I know an aunt of mine, like on Mom's side of the family, was widowed early: she still had four kids. She tried to run the farm. And there was no way I'd put myself in some of the positions she put herself in to get some of the work done. I just wouldn't do it. There's other ways of making a living. And she stayed off of welfare and I guess that was her main statement, to stay off of welfare because she didn't want the label, didn't want her kids to be raised on welfare. My way of thinking is she probably did far worse than if she would have went and asked for some welfare – it probably would have been a lot less degrading than some of the things she did. She chose to do it that way and that's okay. I think she was a super mother; she was just ace with the kids. In fact, whenever I didn't get along with my mom or we had an argument, I'd go over to her. She just had a whole different way of talking, and maybe because it was somebody removed I could go and talk things over with her. And then I'd go back home and feel a lot better. So I really respect her as far as the way she raised her girls. She had four girls also.

Theresa compares the influence of her mother and father on her and her sisters, concluding that in spite of her father's traditional ideas about the 'proper place' of women he remained fairly inactive in the family, while her mother, the strong leader, was more influential.

> I was probably molded by my mother into certain roles of what was right and what was wrong. I think the way I think now, I'm not sure if we'd agree on everything, so somewhere along the way I had to forge my own ideas and my own ways and I don't know where I got that from. I think my dad probably influenced me very little, because he was really a quiet kind of a person. He never said very much. If there was anything that had to be said, it was my mom that said it. So when I think back, I feel like Dad had very little influence on our lives really. Like he probably worked through her in a lot of ways, but like if it came to spanking Mom was always the one that did it, or if it came to any rule setting it was usually Mom that did it, even though Dad had some very set ideas. Sometimes Mom would say, 'Well you know, Dad didn't like that very much,' and I'd stop and I'd say, 'Oh really?' I never got that feeling. And then sometimes when I got to be a teenager and you start questioning your parents and start thinking, 'I wonder if Mother is using Dad for some of this, saying Dad's not going to like it because it was a good way for her to deal with it?' But now, knowing what I know, I know how my dad thinks. One example is of wills. He made a will and rather than making Mom the executor of their property, he's saying me, solely because I am the oldest and that's a sort of old country style – the oldest child has all of these certain responsibilities. So of course this is mine. But he doesn't make *me* the executor, because it's not proper for a woman to be. And like Don and I laugh about it, but Don is named the executor, because he's the man and that's the proper thing to do. So I know my dad thinks that. I don't care what he thinks. Like when I went to work I know Dad was just – 'What do you want to go to work for?' The whole idea is that's terrible. And I guess he knows very little of whatever prompted me to go to work. And probably Don's illness, when Don got really sick, I decided, 'Gee, I don't have a career, I don't have anything of my own, and if something ever happens to him where am I at?' Even though we have the farm and all that kind of stuff and I know that I could run it, I certainly wouldn't want to.
> But my dad never sees it that way. I don't know, I don't think he thinks further than I got married and the husband should be supporting me and that kind of thing, but he doesn't think, 'Okay, what if?' I think Mom was the

> stronger person in the family. Strongest as far as the kids were. Like she was probably the sole molder of the family of all us girls. In fact I don't ever remember Dad saying – I think once I remember getting one slap and that was because I spilled his tobacco. So that's what we always laugh about. And if it came to anything because I came home late or whatever, I always answered to Mom. Like Dad was never waiting up for us. Even thought he'd be mad or upset about something, Mom did it. I don't know if she felt more responsible or she just had the leadership kind of thing, that she just went ahead and did it.

That Theresa values her family is evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?". She explains that what her family means to her is people who will be there when she's in need and who she in turn feels responsible to, a sense of connection or belonging, and a source of information about herself.

> Family – I guess that would also be something I value. I guess when I speak of family, I speak first of Don and I as a family. We have no kids, so we're our entire family. But then I think about my mom and dad, his mom and dad, brothers and sisters. I guess it's very important for me, not on a daily basis, but every once in a while to go and see my sister or phone her and see how she is doing or what's happening. The same thing with parents, like see how they're doing. Or if I don't see them for awhile I figure, 'Gee, what have they been up to? Are they well?' That's probably the next. I guess in a sense it means a support. I know for me in case of illness or some other traumatic thing, I know my family would be all around me to help whichever way they can. But the other thing is I think to me, like I feel responsible for seeing that they are well, and that maybe there's something I can do to help them with. It's mutual. But I don't like being smothered. Like sometimes I think if you live right close to family, there are certain members of the family, they almost over-use you or want to be right there in everything you do. I guess I cringe at that kind of thing because even though I like people and like being around them, I like being my own person. There are some things that I just don't like to share with anybody else and there are some times I want to be by myself, or sometimes I think that Don and I should be alone or whatever. But I think if there was some disaster or something, if all of my family was suddenly gone, I think I'd be really sad. I probably would be able to make it – I think I make friends easily and I'd be able to – but I think it would be something really traumatic in my life, if all of sudden your family was all gone.
>
> I guess just seeing, or knowing who your family is, is probably very important. I don't think you ever give it much thought if you have them, except that I know it is important because of the foster boy that we kept for awhile. He had no family and there was no trace of who his family was. He was given away at birth and I know that to him, I think it was the single factor that really affected all of his life – that he had no connection. He really wanted to belong somewhere. Belonging – I guess if you walk around and you wonder who your mother was or what she was like and all the other questions you have about your family, you don't have that. I see in myself a lot of things, and I've heard people say, 'Gee, there's so many things I see, actions and things that you're like your dad.' Or 'Gee, you look like your mom.' Remarks like that. And I know the make-up of your body, like I know some of the things I've had wrong with me, they have ran in my family. Like an uncle on my dad's side is allergic to aspirin. One day I discovered – well I knew I had this allergic reaction for awhile and I couldn't figure out what it was, and then all of a sudden it hit me because I had the same kind of reaction he had. And sure enough, it was aspirin. I very seldom use it but every once in a while I use one and I'd swell from it. And all of a sudden it hit me, 'Gee, all the different times I remember this happening to me I think it was because I had a headache, and when I had a headache I took an aspirin.' So I never even bothered going to a doctor. I just knew that was it. I cut out the aspirins and all the symptoms went away. So I think there is a whole lot

> that's good about knowing who your family is and for a lot of good reasons. For your own well-being, or your own feeling of belonging, or medical reasons and that kind of thing.

Theresa has also experienced some disappointment as a woman: that she was unable to have children.

> I guess there was some disappointment, like being a woman. We'd have loved to have some children and wasn't able to come through with it, so sometimes I guess I have a little heavy heart and think I really wasn't able to reproduce. I don't think it takes up a whole lot of my time in thinking upon it, but I guess, like I can think of it in a heavy heart as thinking, 'Well gee, I would certainly have liked to have one or two children.' I think when we married and when we talked about having a family and that kind of thing - probably part of it is that I'm disappointed because I know my husband would also have liked to have kids. That was a big thing in his life. I guess I feel even though I don't have much choice over the matter, it's a disappointment. I had one tubal pregnancy and then the doctor told me that I was unable to have any again because I have some problem with my other tube. But then I was pregnant again but the same thing happened; it was a tubal pregnancy.

The difficulty of experiencing medical problems, and of facing not being able to have children, was augmented by Theresa's negative experiences with members of the medical profession with whom she had to deal. She describes how she fought her doctor's judgment that she needed surgery.

> So then, at that time I had an argument with the doctor because he had wanted to take my uterus out and I really didn't feel good about that. But he kept insisting on doing it and I refused to sign that paper. I didn't think it was the best thing and I figured I was too young for that kind of thing. His whole idea was, 'It's just a baby carriage and you're no longer needing it anymore, and why keep it', kind of thing. And I don't know why but I just decided that it must be there for some reason and I really didn't feel good about removing something. Like then I guess I was divided because I didn't want to do it. Is it really there for nothing or is it there for another purpose? And I had to make a split decision right there because when you're laying on the hospital bed and you're going up for surgery in two hours and before they give you that needle that makes you groggy, you know, I had to think fast, so I told him, 'No!' So he walked out of the room in a huff. I didn't feel good about it, because when you're laying hundreds of miles from home and you are all alone and really the only one you can trust. You couldn't talk to any of the nurses because they sort of went along with the doctor or would be very aloof about giving me the answers. I tried to sound out a couple of them and I got the feeling they really didn't want to talk about it. And I can see why they probably didn't, because they didn't want to get in between the doctor and myself. But like I refused! I defied him! And I don't think I was sorry for it. He said, 'You know, you'll be sorry because you'll probably have to come in for surgery again.' And I said, 'Well I guess I'll take that chance. It's my body!' So on that note is when he turned on his heel and left in a real huff. Among other things I didn't feel very good because he was the one who was going to do the surgery in two hours time. So then I felt that I didn't know who I could trust or who I could turn to and I wasn't feeling very good about the surgery to begin with. I wasn't feeling the best and so it was pretty hard to fight him. And he put up a good argument, a good fight, and if I would have hesitated I know he'd have won. Because first of all he sent up the nurse, now that I recall. This paper came up with some nurse that I had to sign, so I read it and I said, 'No! I'm not signing it, because I want to see the doctor first. I know I have to go in for surgery because my tube is just about bursting'. I knew the first one had burst on me so I knew what that was

> coming to. So then when he came in and whether he was rushed or busy – I'm sure he was busy but he certainly made me feel, well, here I am taking up his time kind of thing, and what was this nonsense, I wasn't going to sign the paper? So then, when he tried his best and his darndest to get me to reconsider, I think the harder he tried the stubborner I got, or the more reason I could see for not going through with it. But then like when he turned I think he felt like this was useless. He just turned and just left in a flap without saying anything. I think he was really stupid about it. It didn't make me feel very good and I was just about ready to go down to surgery. He never ever sat down to really explain. But like I knew what I was thinking and why I was thinking, or feeling that way. But I think the least he could have done was sat down and explained in more detail rather than just coming up and saying, 'Well, look, you know we're going to cut it out and that's it.'

After 10 years of health Theresa finally did have a hysterectomy. Again she was appalled by the attitude of the surgeon, his easy diagnosis and his insensitivity to her concerns.

> I was okay for 10 years. It was difficult that I had to go back to surgery again but I think at least I had those 10 years and I was much older. I think back about the one doctor I went to – the first one I saw after 10 years – he was really stinky. You know he did a poor job of an exam, he straightforward told me that it was probably a good chance that I had cancer because I had a lump – which you know, like anybody in his right mind would think of that in the first place but I think it was totally unnecessary for him to say that, before he really knew or had any idea even. He hadn't examined me. He did a really poor job of that; he just looked at my chart and before he even touched me he said, 'Oh, you're 40 so you don't need any of that anymore.' And those are his exact words. So to me that was a setting of just exactly what he was intending to do. And even though I knew what was more or less wrong, I think he should certainly have done some research before he made a comment like that. And I don't think a comment like that was necessary anyway. I guess it made me angry because I thought, 'Well, how can he tell?' Just because he is the surgeon and obviously he likes using the knife; before he even sees what is wrong he decides, 'Oh, you're that age so let's cut it out.' And I wonder, how many men would accept that kind of a thing? And I think probably a lot of women do accept it. I talked to several who had had the same doctor and he used the same, the exact same line on them. You know, they were too timid, or afraid to try anything. Because when I walked out of that office, I guess I made up my mind right there that he was never going to see me again. And it all happened so quick, because the exam – I was only in there maybe 10 minutes and he shoos you out for his nurse to make the arrangements for hospital. I guess I needed some time to think about it. And I told him I had to go home because I wasn't about to make a decision like that. And he said, 'Well, there's no other way out. You don't have much choice and the sooner the better' kind of thing. But I went back to that doctor and told him I was just really dissatisfied with what happened, and I really wanted a second opinion because I figured it was a major decision and it should require some thought. And he encouraged me, he was really good about it. I was sort of brazen because I figured the next thing he'll tell me is take a tranquilizer and go home. But he didn't. So I forgave him that. He said he thought it was quite all right, that he would get me in to see somebody and he said too that it was urgent that I see somebody soon, which I knew myself.

Theresa sought a second opinion, realizing that she had possibly already gained a reputation as a neurotic patient and aware of the emotional strength necessary to approach another doctor. This time, however, she had better luck.

> The second doctor was, I think, a little more sympathetic. I don't know, maybe because he already knew what to expect of me because I'm sure this doctor must have filled him in on it. Maybe his whole mannerism is different. He was a younger doctor and his whole attitude – like he was patient, he explained a whole lot of things. And I told him that when I'm under, like there was no way I could fight and make the decision of what they take and what they leave, so I have to be entirely sure that whoever was going to be doing it, I could trust. He kept a straight face. I don't know if he chuckled or not. But I said, 'If I could be awake in this whole thing I'd feel pretty good but I know that I have to trust that you're going to do the right thing. So I want to know what you're thinking and if this happens or that happens, why you're doing it and what the alternatives would be if you didn't or you did.' So he was good about explaining that. So I decided to go to the surgery with him. I just cancelled out on the other one. But I think oftentimes women accept because they feel foolish to ask another opinion. Doctors have a way of putting you down that can make you feel pretty small or pretty unimportant if they want to. So you have to be really strong to do it for sure. It's not easy to tell him, 'I don't like what you're telling me,' or 'I don't like the way you're doing this.' I don't know how many women do that kind of thing, or how often that happens. But I wouldn't doubt that he probably put it down, just the kind of doctor he was, as only another one of these naughty women running around, or a nutso woman.

The support of a good friend, who happened also to have medical knowledge, was crucial to Theresa in her gaining the confidence needed to approach a second physician.

> I have a good friend, Marie, who I talked to. Like before, this was prior, I was trying to make my decision. And I was going for a second opinion but I felt pretty rotten because I knew the first doctor would really have raised my eyebrows. Not that that really bothered me. I guess maybe I'm a little bit rebellious and I sort of like going against the grain of things, but I just didn't feel good about it. So I called Marie and I said, 'You know Marie, I'd just like to talk to you for a little while.' So she was really good. She came and I told her, 'You know this is what I'm thinking. Do you think I'm off-cue here?' And she really encouraged me to go for the second opinion and she says, 'No! I don't blame you at all for how you're feeling.' And then she explained some of the things she'd seen when she was taking her training, her nursing, and how she felt about a lot of stuff. And I guess she feels about things like I do a whole lot, and I guess that really helped. But it really helped me because then she explained what kinds of things, what she knows of what all the implications are after removal and what other alternatives there are and that kind of thing. And she was in agreement too, like it was absolutely necessary, well of course, but make darn sure it's necessary, before that happens. So I guess that made me feel a lot better and when I went back to the second opinion, like I felt pretty positive about what I was doing and I didn't feel like I had to make an excuse to the doctor. I knew very well that he probably knew that he was the second doctor I was seeing, or the third doctor already – that I was getting a second opinion. But he didn't ask me or say anything, and I didn't either when I first came in. I just went through the exam. But I felt a whole lot better because he really did do a good exam. But after he was through and he told me what he expected was the problem and what the alternatives were, then he said, 'I know that from talking to your family doctor, I know that I'm the second opinion, but I'd just be interested in what the other doctor told you'. So I said, 'Yeah, that was only fair'. So then I told him and I told him how I felt too. I told him I didn't appreciate being told that it was cancer because even though I knew that it could very possibly be, I felt like that was something that could really shove you off the wall. Then when I came back and talked to a couple of other women and found out that they had the same doctor I had had, the first one, and he used exactly the same tactics on them. And the one woman said she didn't like him, she never

> even went back for her check-ups because she said she didn't like the way he handled her afterwards. Like she said there was very little feeling between her and the doctor to begin with, but after the surgery it was even worse because he almost didn't want to have anything to do. Like he was done - he'd cut and that's all he wanted to do. And if she had any other kinds of problems he just told her, 'Lady, I can't do anything for you'. But it really felt good to talk to Marie because I think she understood what I was feeling. Even though she hadn't gone through anything like that, she had enough medical knowledge and that to know what kinds of things might happen. And some of the stuff she told me was right on. And so, like I say, it's the unknown sometimes that a person fears more than if you know what's happening. So for me, like it was really a good support kind of thing to hear, 'Well I know what you're thinking and yeah, you're dead right thinking this way or that way.' And saying, 'Yeah I don't blame you for going to see and I think you should go to see somebody else.' She encouraged me so that even though I guess I'd made up my mind to do that, regardless of what she had told me, it made me feel so much more positive towards the next doctor visit. Because like I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know if he was going to try to push me in the corner, so just having the support of someone else, knowing what I was feeling like and that I had every right to feel that way, really helped me. It gave me courage. Like I think the second doctor was very good, he took time to explain. And I had him go through everything and I talked to him about some of my mom's problems and I said I seen what she was going through. So then I talked to him about the possibility of going on hormones and what that does and then of course it was a big controversy about are hormones harmful or not? So I asked him what he thought about that and he took the time to really explain all that well, and what the latest ideas were and what his beliefs were on it and that kind of thing. So that helped some. But I think there could have been more things that he couldn't help me with, because he was a man and I don't think he understood. You know what kinds of things you worry about and just having another woman to talk to I think - like if you could have someone that's gone through that kind of thing, so much the better. They understand and they can tell you, 'Hey, I went through that,' and you can get encouragement. And I'm sure somewhere down the road when you're feeling like you need someone to talk to again, it'll be just really nice that you have someone in the community where you could go and something was set up - you knew you could go and just talk this problem over.

Theresa values her friends not just for the support they give her when she's in need, but also for the sharing of good times, laughter and a way of perceiving things in common. In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?", she described one friend in particular, what that friend means to her, and how this friend stood by her during her difficult time.

> I also value that I have one really close friend. I think by being able to share or talk things over with her all the time - if there's something that is affecting you in a lot of ways, like if you're upset about something - I know she's somebody I could go and talk to and somebody that would have my best interests in mind if she gave me any advice. And also I think it's been vice-versa. I think I've helped her through many struggles too. It is just a good warm kind of a feeling; I think about her and I think warmly of her. We do a lot of laughing together - a lot of sharing. I guess she's somebody I could cry with and laugh with and just feel good about whatever you do. She'd be as close as any of my sisters would be, maybe even closer. There might be more things I share with her sometimes than I would with any of my sisters. I miss her if I don't see her. Often I know what she's doing or if she does something different she knows in a way I look forward to her coming back or whatever. It's kind of nice to go and have a cup of tea with her; I

know that if I'm tired she'll accept me like I am, or even if I feel particularly annoyed about something she'll hear me out – that kind of thing. I know when I was sick she was a real support. Just the little different things she did, it really makes you think. You develop a friendship and you share all kinds of things and then when I really got sick she just did all kinds of little extra things that was really not called for. It wasn't really even necessary but I know she went out of her way to do them. And you really get to appreciate that kind of thing. And yet we can sit and laugh, or tease each other really about anything or everything, and have a great time. Or go out on a shopping spree or whatever, just do anything together. It's kind of fun to have somebody that I guess maybe thinks a lot like you do. I think probably a lot of our ways are the same– that's why we are so close. Even my sister thinks differently than I do and with my girl friend I guess we're probably on the same level or think the same way in a lot of things. Yeah, I think I really value her friendship. I'd miss a whole lot if I didn't have that. I guess we can both reflect or do reflections of each other quite easily, sometimes we can be hilarious and sometimes sad, but I feel really comfortable with saying whatever we think, and know that you're not going to hurt the other one's feelings.

Before her surgery Theresa encountered a female intern whom she hoped might understand her concerns, woman to woman. She describes what happened and her disappointment.

Then it was the evening before surgery and this woman came in and says, 'I'm interning and I'll be working with Dr.Green on your surgery in the morning, so there's some things I'd like to do.' I supposed it was something like getting a history and that kind of thing. So I thought, 'Oh super, a woman, isn't that nice! I'm going to be able to talk to her even better,' even though the doctor I had then I was satisfied with. Because I had sort of doctor hunted too, wondering if I was going to have a funny mark on my chart somewhere – I decided if I was going to go through this at least I was going to have a doctor that I could talk to. So right away I thought, 'Well no wonder Dr.Green has such a different attitude, because maybe he has a woman working with him.' And I did tell her, I said, 'Gee it's really nice to see a woman training for this kind of thing.' I said, 'I think there isn't enough of that and it's too bad that more doctors in this type of profession weren't women.' And I got the feeling I wasn't getting through to her. She just sat there and her face – there was no expression – her face was expressionless. You always got the feeling that here you were talking to a statue or someone that wasn't really hearing what you were saying. So then after she got done with the medical history, I told her how I felt. But the strange thing was she never ever asked, 'How are you feeling or going through this?' And when we came to a part already where I was going through what I was going through, there was nothing mentioned at all about feelings or if I had any second thoughts. So I thought, 'Well I'll bring the subject up myself.' So I said, 'Gee, I certainly have some questions.' 'Well,' she said, 'what are they?' But I could tell she sort of made the busy appearance like she had to leave in a hurry. So then I told her, I said, 'I'm concerned for a number of reasons,' and I went through some of the stuff. And the only comment she made was, 'It's not doing you any good there and there's only one way out. You know surgery's the only answer.' And off she went. Which left me like a cold potato. I just sort of felt 'ugh', you know?

In an attempt to resolve her feelings about the experience, Theresa tried to understand what factors might have led to the intern's inability to understand and act on her concerns. She also discusses the effect it had on her emotional state and on her confidence in the intern's abilities.

I don't know if she didn't want to get into it. It was almost like she was afraid to listen to what your feelings were about the whole thing, or the patient's feelings were. And I wonder which doctors she's been with because she never really heard what I had to say, other than looking to see what other surgeries I had and what my medical history was. She couldn't care about me as a person at all. I guess that was the worst part. Somehow when she came in I just really wound up and I thought, 'Oh, a lady doctor! Well this is really super because at least she'll understand.' But I don't think she did. I'll never know, but the only thing I thought, and I don't wish her any harm or anything, but, 'I just hope the day comes when you have to live through the same kind of thing and I wonder what you're going to be feeling?' Because it seems like she never gave it any further thought. Here she was, young and vibrant and busy with her studies and I don't think very considerate about the person, period. And I know that a doctor has to be objective, he can't or she can't get emotionally involved, but I think if they don't see you as a person or hear what you're feeling, it's no wonder they look at things like you're crazy if you complain about something twice in a row. I suppose because all the training has done them in probably at this point. So of course she has that kind of an attitude. And if she didn't look at it in any other way, she's obviously just seeing the angle that her professors had been teaching her. In fact I almost had a worse feeling from her than I did from my own doctor, who I thought was pretty good in the end because he listened well. And her attitude was far worse; she wanted to talk about it far less than my doctor did. And she just said, 'This has to happen, there is no other way out,' rather than sit down and say, 'Well gee, what are your concerns?' – which is what I wanted. I wanted to talk to somebody and she never gave me an opportunity. I have men doctors like that too, but she was so mechanical that it was like a robot walking into your room and doing the necessary things. Maybe it was because she was only interning or maybe she had picked some other cues up along the way. But to me it would seem like she didn't have a mind of her own. She was being trained but it was like being molded into something that she didn't dare to look at any other sides or want to get involved in any other way for fear she might disturb this mold that she was getting molded into. I may be dead wrong, but that's the feeling I got from her. I realize that they can't sympathize with every patient, or they can't show sympathy. But she wasn't even trying to understand me, and that's what I wanted. I didn't want any sympathy. I guess when I have to go through anything like that I like to do things alone. I don't even like having family around, where I know a lot of people who prefer that kind of thing. I know Don had said to me, 'Well can I come the night before?' And I said, 'No, I'd rather you came after it's all over with, because I know it's something that I have to go through.' But that not understanding I think is what really hurts, or what really makes you feel hesitant, because then you wonder, 'Well they don't understand, how are they going to do any kind of a job?'

Theresa commented on the myth espoused by one doctor that after a hysterectomy women miss menstruating, describing her experience as just the opposite.

I can't even remember which doctor it was anymore but one of them said something about women tend to feel like all of our periods mean a whole lot to you. And I guess that's been the best thing that's ever happened in this whole deal is that I don't have to worry about anything, in that manner. Like you never even think about it! Every once in a while you think about it or you hear your friends or somebody talking about it and I think, 'Oh gee, I don't even have to worry about that anymore.' Before it always ended up that it seemed you were going somewhere and you decided you were going to wear a white dress or something light, and that's the day your heaviest flow is on. You either had to take your chances or switch into something darker. And I always thought that was kind of a drag. Now I think, 'This is really nice!' But the doctors seem to think that women are upset because they're missing something, or that it's all in their head kind of thing.

Another belief of her doctor – that a hysterectomy itself will not effect a woman's emotional life – was proven wrong by Theresa's experience. She describes how she felt insecure, confused and frightened by the change in herself.

> In the first while after surgery, I guess I was sort of looking or feeling to see how I was going to feel. There was the whole recovery thing, and maybe that was frustrating because it really takes you a heck of a long time to get back on your feet again, but after that I guess I was feeling not my best. Well then they said, 'Well, six months, any surgery, six months it takes.' Okay, so at the six months check-up everything is healed; you healed amazingly well and that whole bit. But then I'm not feeling so good. Like I envisioned it would be like doing things I used to do. What I found strange was, and I can remember my mom saying the same thing, she said, 'What's the matter with me? You know I used to like to sew, I used to like to do these things and I just don't feel like doing them anymore. There must be something wrong with me.' And I went for sure through the same thing I think, because I know the things I used to love doing, or could put all of myself into it, like I just couldn't anymore. I felt like 'Ah, what's the use! I really don't even feel like living so what's the use of doing any of this kind of stuff.' It's a crazy feeling. It kind of confuses you because you notice the change in yourself and I think that's the scary part. You know how you used to feel before and then all of a sudden you're feeling this way and I think if somebody could explain that to you before you go, it wouldn't be so bad. Like I think it even helped to talk to Mom after because she said, 'Oh, that'll last for awhile, but it'll pass over eventually.' Well, for sure, like it's a year and a half now and I'm over it a little more. Like I'm starting to feel my normal self again. I just take life as it comes kind of thing.
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> It's about a year and a half since my hysterectomy now. And I guess it's just in the last two months that I'm really feeling good again. It's taken me about a year and a half. Like there were some bad times there. Like I had some hypoglycemic problems that came up, after the hysterectomy – I hadn't had that before. And I wondered, like I seen my mother go through that – that was the other reason I didn't want to go through with it, because I always thought, if it comes to that for me or anything I'll probably take and hang myself sooner. Like my mother went through some difficult times after. I noticed a change in her whole attitude, her behavior, just everything. I think she was very depressed a whole lot of the time. Like about three quarters of the time for about 10 years I think she was really, really depressed. And the way I seen my mother before, she had a lot of bounce and could sort of fight back with a lot of things. After she would give up; she didn't seem to have the same stamina she had before. And I guess I just didn't want that to happen to me, because I felt like I had a lot of fight in me and I like it that way. I don't think I like being a defeatist or negative about everything. I know some other women who have talked about it and heard how they felt and it seemed to be very similar to what my mother went through. So, I was feeling raw about a lot of stuff. I think there is a chemical change in your body. Like okay I had no idea what it was like until I went through it myself. And even though my mother had a total hysterectomy which is far worse that what I had, which was just having my uterus removed, I certainly noticed changes in me. The doctors poo-poo my idea, like, 'That's no problem, just having your uterus removed. It's not going to affect you any.' But it does. With me there seemed to be a sense of insecurity. Like before I thought I had a lot of energy, drive; I could do anything if I put my mind to it. And somehow, after, like I felt tired all the time and that in the end would drag me down. My whole attitude changed. Like things I liked to do before, I didn't find any kick or challenge in any of that at all. Like I lost all my secure kind of attitudes.

Theresa feels that talking to her mother and other women who had experienced the aftermath of a hysterectony, was helpful in that she gained an understanding of what was happening to her. She reflects on the trauma her mother once experienced in not understanding what was happeningto her.

> And if I hadn't studied, or known a whole lot and because of my work at the office, you know, just hearing from what a lot of women had talked about kind of thing, and knowing that's what I'm going through – I still was going through it even though I knew that this was happening – I guess it helped me maybe get through it much sooner than a lot of other women because I finally understood what was happening. But I think like what my mom went through – it was about 15 years before I did, so she must have found it really terrible. Because I think she probably didn't understand what was happening. And I think that we probably didn't either. I'm sure my dad didn't. And even though we tried everything in our wits it was really confusing. You know, we'd be having a good time and all of a sudden she'd go off for a good cry and we just couldn't figure out what was going on for the longest time. Well, we knew that it had something to do with that, but I think it would have been helpful if we'd been forewarned of what to expect and how to handle this kind of thing. It would have been better for her and I'm sure for everyone else.

Theresa's dissatisfaction with the medical profession took her to a naturopath whom she experienced as being more helpful than her doctors had been.

> I think the most help I found was I went to see a naturopath, because I'm a strong believer in vitamins. I knew if I pushed the medical doctors I would probably get a tranquilizer and I wasn't about to start them because I didn't think it was anything I really needed to take them for. So then I went to see this naturopath. He explained to me what was happening and what their idea was of treatment, and your body was very short of a lot of B vitamins now and I was borderline hypoglycemia. So it makes me wonder if maybe any other women are in the same boat. And I know that when I went on a vitamin therapy it certainly helped me. I think that's what made me come through. I heard other women say it takes you about 3 years to get back to yourself. I think I am back to my normal self now, so I think I've probably done it in flying colors. I've done it in a year and a half. And I was in really good shape when I went in, so I wonder about women who have been really sick or run down, you know, them going through that. Like they must be going through a whole lot of hell. Because I was ace when I went in – like I was in good physical condition and I hadn't been run down in any way and my health was really good. So I'm sure going through the surgery was really nothing. I was home from the hospital in six days. The body heals, or the scars heal quickly, but whatever else is happening inside you, whatever sort of turns you on is what counts. For some strange reason I think there must be more happening than doctors are able to, or have ever tried to even figure out.

Based on her experience of a hysterectomy, and understanding what was helpful to her, Theresa talks about what she would like to see happen for other women who have hysterectomies. She envisages a clinic that gives information and offers counselling services, not just to women but to their families as well.

What I'd like to see happen myself is that some kind of clinic or something be set up where families or a person for sure going through that kind of thing, could talk to someone so they would know, be forewarned by what will be happening to them. Because I don't know of anybody that goes through with flying colors, with that type of surgery. After I had gone through my check-ups, I know that you have to be physically well, and once they said I was healed and nothing else wrong, you still say that you're just not feeling well and they just poo-poo the whole idea. If you push it, if you insist on it, I know you get a tranquilizer, and I wasn't about to fall for that. I think if the people around you understand what's happening, how long you can expect that kind of thing to last and what kinds of things you can do to make yourself feel better, I think that's far better than a tranquilizer. I would bet that in 99 percent of the cases it probably would work if it was handled right, right from the beginning. And that's before the woman goes in for surgery. Something I'd like to see happen is that women or probably the husband and the wife would do some type of counselling or have someone to talk to. And afterwards too, to have a place where they can go in and share all kinds of things they're feeling. Because I think men have an idea that things are not going to be the same. And I think even though Don was really good because we've had all kinds of counsellor training and stuff like that, but I was apt to bring him back to reality. Like oftentimes I'd tell him, "Look, I almost feel like you're just saying, 'oh yeah, it's because of the surgery that she's feeling this way'." I know that he said that I had been really touchy about things that I hadn't been so touchy about before, and I think that's probably correct. But I think it's hard; like I think he was feeling confused a lot of times because he was finding me a little different than what I was. Before I think I was like a Rock of Gibraltar, nothing rocked me. And then I found myself where I'd cry easily and that's something I never did before. Any remarks that had been made sort of off, I'd really have to work on it. I'd think, 'Okay, this is nothing to really dwell on or work over,' but it does affect you that way. As for Don, like I think, oftentimes I explained to him, well, gee, it would really make me feel good when he'd really stop and say, 'Well hey' and come and put his arm around me or whatever. That really felt good and I wonder how often that probably doesn't happen for people that haven't got a clue about anything. Because we could easily talk; we always did talk easily. It was fairly easy for me to explain to him how I was feeling and he'd sit and listen, even though sometimes I think he was a little exasperated. But I think if he could have been filled in, like before the surgery or maybe when I was, you know the day he sat with me all day in surgery, like they could have done something at the hospital or have something set up while he was waiting for the whole thing - he could have been talking to somebody and talking about his feelings. Because I know he often, like now for example, this morning he says, 'Well what's Cheryl doing with all of this?' So I explained to him. So he said, 'What kinds of things are you talking about?' And I said, 'I don't know, we're still on question number one'. Anyway this is what we were talking about and I said, 'I was explaining to her how I was feeling too about the surgery and that.' And he said, 'Yeah, it takes such a darn long time to get back to normal, doesn't it?' So he realizes that and knows that. It affected both of us. Like before he knew he could depend on me and all of a sudden he couldn't. Like I'd be frustrated with a lot of things, so I'm sure he found me different too and was probably bewildered by that a lot too. So that's where I think it would help if you were forewarned. Like if you knew what kinds of things - not that that's going to take it away because you have to go through that kind of thing and that's all there is to it - but I think if you know what to expect then you know that somewhere there's going to be an end to it and that it's okay to feel that way, there are some changes. Rather than thinking of the way it is right now, it's like it's all in your head, kind of thing. I think that's really what's upsetting. Well, you tell someone they're crazy and whether they are or not, pretty soon you can make them believe that they are. I think that's the biggest thing because it's just not being looked at in the proper aspect or there hadn't been enough research done on it. And all the doctors see is they cut it out and the spot heals up and everything's back to normal, so that's all right. Everything's back to normal but that's not

> right, that's not correct. I think that we were probably more prepared than a lot of other people. I wonder what happens to people that are totally ignorant?

That the need for education is truly great was reinforced for Theresa by an experience she had while in the hospital. Further, her lack of confidence in the medical profession's ability to understand the effect of a hysterectomy on women's emotional life was also reinforced.

> Something that I should probably mention that is really interesting to me. Like we shared a room in the hospital and there was another lady about my age that had a hysterectomy as well, and she'd had the surgery the day before I did. She was so unaware, no clue as to what was going to happen, what body changes were going to come about or what. And she really got agitated because she said to me, 'Well gee, I wonder how my periods are going to be?' And I said, 'Well you're not going to have your periods anymore.' And she said, 'What? That's not true! One of the nurses told me that I would.' But I said, 'Where do you think that all comes from?' So she got so agitated by that, she rang the bell and called the nurse. And the nurse came in. It was a young student nurse – well, she was in her third year or second year of training so I wouldn't think she was that naive – but she came in and said, 'Well, yeah, I'm sure you're going to be getting your periods.' I couldn't believe it! I sat there with my mouth open. And so Rose says, 'See!' But I said to the nurse, 'Well you'd better go and get a book and start reading lady, because I am no nurse but I can tell you something. I know that much!' So she went back and came back with a flaming red face and she said, 'I'm sorry but you will not be getting your period anymore.' So that really made me think, and I said to myself, 'Well, if they know so little about that, how do they know about a lot more important things that are happening that you can't see?' Like this lady was a kindergarten teacher, and had been doing some stuff up in the far north, but obviously she hadn't read anything or didn't know, she still didn't know! But then when the nurse came in and said that, I told her, I said, 'Rose, that's not true. I know that that's just not possible.' 'Oh yeah', she said, 'I still have my ovaries is what they told me, so I know.' I says, 'But do you know you don't have your periods from your ovaries?' But then when the nurse came in it was just unbelievable. I just couldn't believe my ears! Like if somebody would have told me that, I would never have believed that that was possible. But again, maybe she missed some part of her studies or something. Obviously they didn't know very much about female mechanics. And they just accepted whatever somebody tells them. So somebody tells them it's not necessary, they'll believe it. And then if they don't feel good about it afterwards, well then they'll say it was just one of those things. There's nothing to do. They never think that maybe it's something to do with whatever happened.

The issue of unnecessary surgery being performed on women is real for Theresa, based on her personal experience and that of women she knows. She explains her anger toward the medical profession for their treatment of women and the frustration she experiences in not being able to do anything to change the situation. She recognizes, however, that she can speak to other women about her experience and that collective action may be an answer.

I think there is more, for sure, unnecessary kinds of surgery done. I know a couple of women that have gone to different doctors afterwards. They had back troubles so the had a hysterectomy and then ended up six months later, they still had back trouble. So then you go to another doctor and he says, 'Oh that surgery was unnecessary,' because it was a disc or whatever. Well, nice time to tell me! That's pretty scary! I remember reading a report – I think someone in Paris did a report a couple of years ago on how many unnecessary surgeries are done. And not appendicitis, tonsillitis and that kind of thing, but hysterectomies were at the top of the line somewhere. I think men would probably question why something was done or they would be really leary about having anything done. And nobody would bat an eye about it. But if a woman suggests that she doesn't feel very good about something, well they just put it off to 'Oh, she's just a woman and she worries too much.' I guess in a lot of respects it makes me angry, you know, the way things would happen or the way a doctor treated me. And all the other respects, I guess it really makes me feel bad because I think of how all the women, for the women now that have one, and women in past days when things were just not discussed, even less than they are now, and it really makes me sad. It really makes me feel really bad that there is nothing we can do about it. You almost feel like your hands are tied because everytime you turn around you're banging your head against the wall. So I guess I've got two kinds of feelings. And where in one part it makes me angry and I know that there's probably some things that we can't do anything about. I guess that's what makes me angry because I guess I never like to give up on anything, and if I really feel strongly about something I keep insisting on it and eventually something happens from it. But this I found really almost disgusting in some points. Maybe it's too big for me to handle. Maybe there is something that can be done about it but I feel like I can't do anything about it. I guess the only thing I can do about it is talk about it. So if I know of anybody going through that kind of thing or gone through that thing, I'll make sure I fill them in on all I know. Because I think the only thing we can do is if we all push in the same way and get some of these doctors to sit back on their haunches. And it's too bad that most of them are men. Although like I talked about that woman intern that came in. Obviously she's been trained by men because she thinks like a man. And that's too bad!

In spite of her anger toward a predominantly male institution and her frustration in not being able to change how women are treated, Theresa is still glad she's a woman and finds it exciting.

I still say I'm glad I'm a woman, even though there's a lot of frustrating parts to being a woman. I think it's exciting to be a women I don't think I'd ever want to change my role, you know to be a male. It never occurred to me even. I think I've probably gotten anything I've ever wanted, yeah, anything I really wanted. Like if I really wanted something bad enough, if there was anything I could do about it, like I usually rolled up my sleeves and did something about it. So I guess that makes me feel good. If I decided I was going to do something and I decided it was good for me to do it and I wanted to do it, like I did it, and didn't worry that because I'm a woman, should I do this kind of thing? I'm sure that my husband knows that and I think he likes me that way too, even though a lot of times he says 'Oh gee,' this or that. But I'm sure he would find it pretty dull if it was any other way. I think there are certainly a lot of restrictions to being a woman, but I guess that doesn't really bother me. I think you have to worry about, you know, you're not as strong in strength and whenever it comes to doing something you maybe have to depend on a male or someone to do it, but I can get by with that. I'm thinking about physical work kinds of things. I know I can only lift so much and if it comes to something stronger then I know. I'm not really mechanically inclined when it comes to something wrong with my car – that's where my husband's probably far better at it than I am. But I guess that doesn't really bother me because I know what I can do about it, or what

alternatives I can have.

At the same time Theresa is aware of and doesn't like the risks of being a woman – the risk of being seen by men as "fair game."

> The thing I don't like is probably the risks of being a woman. But I think there are a lot of men that – I have had it happen to me where by a gesture you know they figure that because you're a woman and because you're weak, they can take advantage of you, and that really makes me angry. I guess my first reaction is to fight and my adrenalin really starts flowing. That really makes me angry! I think I'm quite a warm kind of person and I guess any time I ever see anybody I never look at them as a man or a woman. And if they come to my door and needed a cup of coffee and were hungry, whether it's a man or a woman I'd certainly invite them in without thinking twice, if my husband was home or not. And I guess I've gotten into a couple of binds on that. And that makes me angry! Because I think if my husband invited someone in nobody would think twice, but if I do then –

She describes an incident that occured with a 'friend' of her husband's, and her reaction to him.

> Like the one incident we had was a fairly good friend of ours, or of Don's. He used to come around often and we knew him well and I thought he was just a friendly kind of a guy. He'd come a lot of times when Don wasn't around and I never thought anything of it; I'd invite him in for coffee. And then the one night, it really upset me and I guess even though it was years ago, it still just really makes me angry. His wife was very pregnant and was at our place and had gone to bed because she was tired. And I was doing up lunch dishes – we had had tea before that with some other company – and Don had gone out to check on something in the yard. So I was at the sink, minding my own business, cleaning up the table. He'd had a couple of drinks but I didn't think he was really drunk and he came up and decided that he was going to get fresh. That just really made me angry! My first reaction was – like it happened so quick and he caught me off guard and I never even stopped to think. I just really let him have it! And that kind of surprised me because I didn't know how I'd ever react in that. And I'm sure I surprised him too. Like I just smacked him. And because he was sort of off guard, he got it right across the face. And at the same time, Don walked into the house. And the only thing I could think of was, 'Oh, you dirty pig!' That's the first thing that struck me. I thought about this poor pregnant wife who had been having all kinds of difficulties, who had gone to bed, and I couldn't stand it. Until this day, I don't want to speak to him; I don't want to have anything to do with him. Like I just feel like he's dirt. I don't know how many times he's pulled a stunt like that. Fortunately he doesn't live in our community, but they were back several times because they knew some other people around. After that I said to Don, I could hardly wait till morning came. It just spoiled that whole weekend. These people were staying with us; that's what made it so uncomfortable. So thank goodness it was Saturday night and Sunday morning came. And I felt so sorry for his wife. And I debated, 'Should I tell her or shouldn't I tell her.' And then you don't know what kind of a reaction you're going to get from her, so I thought best to just not say anything. And somehow I got throught breakfast and they left. I said to Don, 'Don't you ever invite them here again. I don't ever want to see him again.' And the dirty pig, like a couple of months later there was a wedding in town and of course they were invited and he just sauntered up and wanted to dance with me. And I couldn't believe it! I had never said anything to him – like the next morning he was really uncomfortable. I don't know if his wife noticed anything or not but I just ignored him and made it as uncomfortable as I could for him. I tried to be civil to his wife at least because I just didn't feel good about it. And they went off. So when he came that evening to dance I thought, 'Here's my chance!' And I just told him. I looked at him straight in the

> eye and I said, 'Just go drown yourself or do whatever you want. Don't you even come near me!' And he turned around. I think he'd had a few drinks that night too, so he probably felt brave enough to come. But I know that he was trying to – whether he was sorry for the incident, but he never ever apologized. Like I think if he had even said, 'Okay I was drinking, I'm sorry I made an ass of myself', or whatever, I think I could have appreciated that and accepted it. But he didn't! He ignored it! I think that was just really stinky of him. And that kind of thing makes me mad because I'm sure no wife would ever come and kiss Don in the kitchen or the bathroom and do a thing like that. That's the kind of thing that's difficult being a woman, because of the way men see you I guess. I enjoy to be flattered or I enjoy if somebody says something. We have a lot of friends where guys will say to Don, 'Gee you're lucky. I sure like your wife.' I enjoy that. As long as it is done in a light, friendly manner, and I know they're honest and they're talking openly about it. But that kind of thing. I guess I just panicked and I certainly wouldn't want to get pushed into anything I didn't want to do.

Theresa described a second incident in which she felt the risk of being female. The reactions she experienced were first disbelief, then anger, disgust and fear, and finally, anger again.

> Another incident, that I really learned the hard way, was a propane man. We used to have our house heated with propane gas, and this was one bad winter, everybody was low on gas so we phoned the company and they said, 'Yeah, he's coming tonight.' It was just a heck of a blizzard blowing out there and the guy came about 10:30 that night. I thought, 'My gosh, he's been running such long hours! I know he was out at five in the morning.' So I was really happy when I seen this propane truck come up. Don was in town. There was a bonspiel going on so I think he was curling, and I was home watching television or sewing or whatever I was doing. You know the first thing that I thought of was that since he's been running such long hours, 'Gee, maybe he's hungry. It's late and there's no cafe in town.' And I knew he had to drive all the way back to Slave Lake. So when he came to the door with the bill I said, 'Would you like a cup of coffee or anything?' It was the wrong move! So he said, 'Yeah!' Boy, his face just warmed up and I, being the dummy I am, just figured, 'Well, he really appreciates this.' But then I said, 'It won't take long, the water is warm'. And I said, 'Are you hungry? Because I know when I phoned the company they said you'd be around late tonight sometime and you've been running off your feet in the last week.' He said, 'Actually I haven't eaten since dinner time.' And I said, 'Would you like me to fix you a sandwich?' So oh yeah, he'd really like that. So I turned and went to the fridge because I thought he isn't going to want to spend very much time, because he'll be in a hurry, and I halfway expected Don anytime around the corner. So I quickly rushed to make him up a sandwich from the fridge. But I turn around and here he is, in the kitchen, had his coveralls off and straightening his shirt, and right away I got an uncomfortable feeling. Although he didn't make a move or anything, he seemed as friendly as ever. I had set the table; I had put the cups on already. I thought I'll have a cup of coffee with him. And I had him sit directly – like opposite each other. So he was facing the long way and I had my cup set on the opposite end. And I thought, 'gee, I know that he has delivered gas here a few times before, so I know him, but not that well'. He takes his cup – he acted like he was in your house every day – and moves his cup over to mine. And I kind of thought, 'Well gee, I have this funny feeling.' But still I thought, 'Well this is crazy lady! Smarten up here and get ahold of yourself!' So pretty soon he started making some other passes and I says, 'Look fella, I think you've got the wrong idea here. I asked you in for a cup of coffee so if you want to have your coffee and your sandwich you go ahead.' Of course I was feeling pretty good because I knew that Don would be in any minute so I wasn't really worried. But boy, it really gave me a funny feeling. So he did. Fortunately he was polite enough, but like it really gave me a sick feeling. I thought to

> myself, 'Is that what inviting you in for a cup of coffee meant to you?' Obviously he must have thought, 'Oh, here's this lady at 11 o'clock at night inviting me in.' And I never thought of it in that way at all. Because Don had even mentioned, you know, 'The poor son-of-a-gun is probably going to be hungry,' because Don trusts. And after I thought, 'Sure, wouldn't this look nice in a court? Sure, she invited him in at 11 o'clock at night, husband not home.' And I guess it's scary because I know, because of the strength, if it ever came to a battle, well you'd sure lose because how strong are you? Unless you can think quick enough of something else. But I think you're only lucky if you get away from him. So that makes me angry because I think, 'Why can't they like me as a person?'

Being treated by men as an object of their sexual fantasies, without consideration for her own position, upsets Theresa. The fact that some men believe it is alright to do this affects her feeling of safety, and she wonders if this can change.

> I didn't have a lot of admirers or whatever, but I never cared for anybody, and Don was the only one I ever really thought anything of. And I guess I just don't see men that way. I'm sure there must be somebody else around that would probably be attractive to me or whatever too, but I guess that kind of thing just never occurs to me. When I see a man, I don't think of him first as a sex object. I don't think of that kind of thing. I enjoy talking to them – we have several men friends that come around and I enjoy talking to them for the conversations that we have or whatever, and never think of them in that kind of manner. I guess men think differently than women, or a lot of men. I shouldn't put them all in the same category either. But to me, if some guy invited me in for coffee, I guess I wouldn't think – I'd probably think of my safety first, or wonder how safe it would be to go in – but I wouldn't be thinking, 'Ah ha! This is an invitation to hop into bed with him.' And I don't know if that can ever change. I keep thinking, if you can put a guy in his place, I enjoy doing that.

Theresa reflects on her own attitudes toward sex and the high moral standard she learned from her mother. While she feels strongly about her standards she understands that attitudes toward sex have changed and doesn't judge others whose attitudes are different from her own.

> I have nothing against sex. I think there's a lot of good with it. And I think if you have a good relationship you're certainly going to have a good sex life as well. But I don't see anything to hopping into bed with any guy and every guy. I guess I have my own standards of what I think is right and what I think is wrong, and I can accept what other people have or do with their life. Like if it's hopping into bed they like, it's all right by me, but I know that wouldn't be something I'd be comfortable with.
>
> I guess I have probably a high moral standard. I don't think we were a deeply religious family when we were brought up, but I think that Mom certainly instilled in us what was right and what was wrong. The one thing was that it was wrong to hop into bed with everybody. I think that kind of stayed. And I guess that I maintain that feeling even though I read and I see how things are changing. I think there's a lot of merit to that and there's probably a lot of good reasons for that, and that's my personal opinion. But it doesn't bother me if somebody else has a different standard.

At the same time, Theresa feels that women, more so than men, are being hurt by sexual freedom. She describes how she has seen women being hurt and learned that women experience social pressures to be sexually active or inactive.

I'd probably be the first one to point out if somebody was having difficulty, I would say, 'These are my standards and this is how I feel, why they're important and why they're good.' Like I think there's some reasons for that kind of thing. I think too much sexual freedom is hurting. Probably it hurts the woman more than it hurts the man because I think women tend to get more emotionally involved. From what I've seen from friends of mine and different things that have happened, I think somehow men lose some respect for a woman, in my information, or maybe the men that I see are in my age group. And I know that's happened because I've seen it happen. And when the woman tends to get more emotionally involved or stronger in her feelings towards the guy, the man after awhile loses interest. I haven't quite figured out why that is but it seems to happen. I've seen it over and over again. So I guess my standards, even in this day – I've often talked to girls or women that were divorced my age or like some of my friends are separated or widowed. If that happened to me, I don't know how I'd fit in the world. I guess I'd have maybe a difficult time because I have my standards and I don't know what effect it would have on any of the guys. I certainly would probably enjoy going out with a guy if he asked me, if it was somebody I enjoyed being with. But I think my standards are fairly high to what most guys' standards are. I don't know, I really don't know how that would affect any kind of a relationship I would have or what the guys would say. I guess the first thing after he'd ask me out for dinner, I'd say 'What's next? What else does he expect?' I think that would be my first question.

Because I've heard women, just working where I'm working, like women have called me up and want help for whatever reasons. But there has been more than one case of women I talk to that are living in this community and their husbands are out working up North or wherever. They're sort of alone most of the time and there are lots of instances of that happening to them. Some guy would be really nice and so she accepts that because maybe her door handle fell off or something went wrong, so the neighbour's husband offers to come and fix it and so she thought, 'Isn't that nice.' But the next thing is that they're knocking on her door at 12 o'clock at night. I'm sure that it can happen whether you're married or whether you're single, but I think anytime you're left alone, like if there's no husband by your side. I'm sure if I went three times in a row to the bar without him in town, like I know a lot of guys and I wouldn't doubt – sometimes I think I should get a fund and do an experiment – but I wouldn't doubt that I'd have some guy wanting to take me out and that's the first thing they think about is, 'Ah, she's probably looking around; she's missing out on something at home.' Because that's exactly the way they talk. I know I've had a lot of arguments with guys and sometimes it has been in fun or in a group somewhere, there's husbands and wives even, or friends of ours that drop in. So I think, like I have a real good girl friend of mine, how many years she's never married, and she always talks about it. She says she's had to break off with a lot of married men and she says like how many friends do you have that are single? The majority are married. So right away if you're around, not only the razing you get, which she says doesn't bother her because she says, 'I can take that.' But she says, 'The thing that really bothers me is that I have some real good women friends I've made and yet the husbands have made passes at me, which really makes it uncomfortable for me. Because then you don't know how the women are going to feel. If the wife finds out she may think that you're contributing to it. You hate to be the cause of a marriage break-up or whatever.'

Central to the problem is that a woman alone is assumed to be a legitimate target for sexual advances. That other women are aware of this and react either by rejecting the woman or overcompensating for their uncomfortable feelings about her, is made clear by Theresa in the following passage.

> Another thing I've heard my friend complain about is that she'll have a really good friend but she doesn't get invited out anymore because all of a sudden she's alone and they find her too attractive for some of their married friends or their husbands maybe. Or else she says the other thing happens is when she goes out to maybe Diner Dan's or something, and the women are just so obvious - making their husbands dance with her. And she says that makes her feel bad too, because she feels like, 'Why don't they just accept me? I enjoy going out, I enjoy sitting there and I don't necessarily have to dance.' But it doesn't matter what you're trying to do, you're always standing out in a crowd because you're alone. But I think women do that kind of thing too without thinking about it a lot of times.

While Theresa understands that women are subject to unwanted sexual advances, and she herself is sometimes afraid, generally she is not afraid. In partial answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced being powerful?", she declared:

> I guess maybe I've also felt powerful in the thing that I'm not afraid. Like my mom - I remember when we used to go and stay in a motel room or something and I always laugh about that because she always locked the door and pushed the dresser against the doors. As a kid I used to stand there and think, 'Well this is crazy! What if somebody came in the window? How would we get out? By the time we'd moved that dresser out we'd never get out of here.' I guess I'm not afraid. Like I'm not scared of anything. I guess if I'm home alone, like if Don's gone for awhile, I like locking the house, because I wouldn't like to walk into the house in the dark, say when I'm coming home at night, and maybe have somebody startle me. That would probably scare me, or I think it would put me at enough of a disadvantage that I might do something stupid and not have enough time to think logically or think quickly. But other than that, I guess that's a sense of power. I'm not scared. If anybody comes to the door - like sometimes I know I get that funny feeling, 'You'd better be a little careful here,' or whatever. My commonsense tells me that. But more than anything sometimes I might get into trouble because I probably wouldn't have the power of wrestling anybody down, if I had to. But I never think about that. I always think, 'I'm not afraid of any guy or anything, anybody trying to make me do something I wouldn't want to do.' And I know that that's not quite right because I know for sure in some instances if it came to a fight with a man or something, well of course you'd lose because of power. But that never bothers me. I guess I always think I'd use some other resources or something else would come to my mind that I could probably use if I had to. And that's if I had enough time to think. And that's why the only reason I'm afraid is to walk into a dark house if I thought somebody might be there. But other than that, like I know my mom is scared to stay herself to this day, and I'm not. I guess I don't worry too much about any particular situation. I figure, 'When I come to it, somehow I'll handle it. And why worry about being afraid somebody's going to come? Somebody may never come.' I like to be armed - like I like knowing all the latest techniques women use and all that kind of stuff because I think it's good to know all of that, and not for sure to sit in the dark and be stupid about it. But I'm not afraid. I certainly wouldn't go out hitchhiking or doing anything like that, because I know there's a danger in there and I would worry about that.

Theresa's confidence in being able to handle a 'particular situation', should it arise, no doubt comes from her past experience in successfully handling men who overstepped her limits, her generally optomistic attitude about life, her awareness of potentially dangerous situations and the preventive action she takes to protect herself.

> I like power locks on my car door because a couple of times I've been out on the highway where I've had some funny incidents happening and it does give you a funny feeling right there. Like one time I was going down the road and I had to slow down because there were a couple of guys and I think they were a couple of drunks which probably would be the easiest things to get rid of. But the one guy tried to open the door as I was driving by or grab onto the door, and that gives you a funny feeling. Because what would happen? I know darn well! What would you do if he has a gun or a knife? Even if he is sober he's a lot stronger than you are, so what would you do? You'd definitely have to do whatever he asked you to, to a point. But I never worry about that. Like I think you have to be alert to a certain extent, so you know what's going on. Like that's like being armed. So when we were looking for a new car, I said to Don, 'Well, one thing I'd like is power locks.' Because I get in and out of the car, and my car is never locked unless at night. I always lock it when I'm in town so that nobody could crawl into the back seat or something. But when I get in, even highway driving, I never think of locking the car doors right away.

Theresa related an incident in which she used her commonsense (i.e., the sense she has made of her experience) to avoid a potentially dangerous situation.

> Another time I was going to another town to work, and there was somebody laying across the road and I went around him. But I had a funny feeling that maybe there was something funny about the whole deal, so I didn't stop. But then when I got about a quarter of a mile I thought, 'Gee, maybe this was a hit and run or something.' I was about three miles out of town. So I decided what I would do is turn around and go back to the first house and call the police. But when I got there, when I got about half a mile up I stopped to where I could turn because I didn't want to turn right there. I thought, 'Heaven knows what's happening!' Another car came by so I just stopped and I waited till they went by and they never stopped. So the guy got up and walked off in the ditch and there were two other guys sitting in the ditch. I seen them get up from the grass. So like sometimes I think you could do something stupid. Probably the stupidest thing I could have done was stop and get out of the car, which to me was obvious. Because it was the middle of the day; it was a hot day and he was laying face up and I couldn't tell if he was dead or hurt or what. And the first thing that struck me was that this doesn't look very good but why would a guy be lying straight across the road? He's not slumped or anything. So my commonsense told me, 'Don't stop' and then I drove by. But then I kept thinking, 'Wouldn't I feel awful if they said it was a hit and run afterwards or something. And who knows when somebody else will stop?' So I waited for that other car because I thought, 'Well, maybe they'll stop' because there were a number of people in that car, but they didn't stop either. And the guy got up and walked off. When I saw the two others guys stand up in the ditch I thought, 'Well, that was good!' So I think you learn from every experience and that experience certainly taught me to think twice about stopping.

Theresa is very clear that she feels her power lies in her ability to out-smart or out-think an opponent. Related to her ability to be powerful in this sense, is her lack of fear. She explains when she would and would not use her power.

> I think I know where my power lies. It's not in physical strength but it's probably in maybe out-smarting or - I don't know what the word would be - out-plotting or out-thinking somebody, I guess in a sense. Or having the smarts, enough smarts to sort of think your way through first before you do anything. Does that make any sense? So maybe that's why I'm not really afraid. And I'm not saying I haven't panicked in certain situations. Certainly I've had a pretty fast heartbeat and been afraid sometimes. Because I know for sure how far I can go and how far I can't. But if it comes to what I guess

you'd call a power struggle in out-smarting somebody, I think I might not be the smartest I'm sure – I could learn a lot because you learn everyday – but I wouldn't be afraid to try. But I don't like doing it. I won't do it. I'll avoid it, do all kinds of things to avoid it. But if I have to, if I am forced to, well then I'll fight. I'll fight mean if I have to. But I don't like doing it. Like I think it is probably part of my upbringing or whatever, but even if somebody was mean or did something terrible to me, I guess my conscience wouldn't let me do something just to be mean back. Like I think justice would have to be done, whatever that would be. But I couldn't be mean, just because I had that power, and then live with it and feel good about it. I have to be honest with whatever I am doing. It has got to be the truth, or something I believe in. Sometimes it might be not the same kind of view somebody else has, but if I believe strong enough that that's right, and if I figure I'm not malicious about doing it, well then I think there might be some other reasons that you're doing it for. You might be fighting for yourself or for the truth of it all, or whatever. But not for malicious reasons. And I guess maybe that's why I'll dodge or do all kinds of sidetracking things to avoid a confrontation. But if I have to I would. I'll in the end do it, but by that time I've probably built up a whole lot of reasons of why I have to do it. I have to think it out well.

Theresa understands the complexity of being a woman in today's society, and again states that she finds it a challenge. She recognizes that society restricts women in the sense of providing them with fewer options than men – in her case, she was not given an education. Although the isolated, northern region where Theresa lives is a factor in her not being able to obtain further education now, she understands that there would be ways to overcome this problem if providing educational opportunities for women was a priority in government policy.

I guess like all things, being a woman is probably a pretty complicated thing. And I think if you don't know where you're at, or you don't have some certain standard or haven't figured out what you feel comfortable with, I think it's probably difficult being a woman. For me, I think it's challenging and I like a challenge and so I enjoy that kind of thing, even though some of the stuff that's happened makes me angry. But I can think back on it and put it to experience and say, 'Oh, next time I'll be smarter', and laugh. Like I just enjoy doing what I do and I think there's something good in everything you do, work wise or what. I guess I always see everything as interesting and like you learn from everything you do, so I'm always looking around to see what else I can learn. And it seems like every day you learn something different. I don't know what other things I could have done if I would have been a man. Probably had some exciting career or something that I haven't because I'm a woman, but I guess that doesn't really bother me. I like my job since I started working; I enjoy the challenge of it. I enjoy what I learn from it and I enjoy what I put into it. I think I probably have been able to help quite a few women that have it worse, and that makes me feel good. I know I've been quite a valuable assistance to a lot of the families I work with, and that's good. I feel good about that. It doesn't really bother me that I don't have any fancy career or a lot of letters behind my name or whatever. I know that there are certain restrictions to that and had I been a man it probably would have been a heck of a lot easier to go and further my education or whatever.

I've often talked to an economist in the area and he said the problem with the women in our area is that they're lacking in a lot of education and they're restricted a lot. Because I know like I probably would have loved to – my big bag is nutrition. I'm really interested in that and I looked for about three years; I've been looking around for something that I could take by correspondence. How could I? Like it would be university? I guess I could do it if I really wanted it but I wish there was something that was available to

> us out in our area that we could take. Because, sure we have an AVC, but that's really restricted to lesser kinds of things because the community's not big enough. They always say, 'Well, we'll bring anything you want but you have to find eight people.' Well, I probably can't find eight people who are interested in what I am interested in. I think that there have to be different ways of keeping women stimulated. I think one of these would be to have more correspondence courses available or educational types of things where women, whether they are at home or working or whatever, can further their education if they want to. Whether you're a single mother with four little kids and you're trying to make a living, maybe you want to further your education. Even if it's a very slow kind of a process, at least you're doing something about it and you're learning and I think you'll feel a whole lot better about yourself.

At first glance Theresa appears not to have been too affected by her lack of education. After a closer look, however, we see that this has affected her family life, her career and her self-image. In answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?" she answered:

> What I regret probably is having a lack of education or that I could have some better kinds of education. I think a lot of other things could have happened. We would probably not have got ourselves into a lot of binds we did get ourselves into. I think, for one example, we would have been a heck of a lot more independent, had I had some profession or something. It would have made it a lot easier, whether he farmed or did whatever he chose to do. I think it's really important! Like now I'm happy with where we are because we like that, but I wasn't always happy about it. I sort of felt like I don't think it was right for him. He had to do what he felt good about doing, and so I never really interfered in that kind of thing. I know there were a couple of times he was deciding, maybe we should move away, we should do this or that. And whatever he would decide, if he felt comfortable in doing – like I knew he hated trucking but he did that before we were married and he said, 'You're away from home all the time.' He just didn't like that so I wasn't about to push him into something that he didn't want to do, so whatever he chose to do, I went along with it and did my best to make the best of it. So I think in regrets, if I had to do things over again, I think I would probably have tried to get more education along the way, so that it would be a lot easier, financially.
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> And having more education would make it easier even now. A lot of struggles I have, you know wherever you go, your educational background is really important and when you haven't got any of that, like it's a battle. You always have to battle against someone. Okay, you have applied for a job, well some of them have a diploma and you don't. Well who's going to get the job? You have to have a lot of other good points going for you. And I think there's some restrictions. Like I know that when it comes to writing out stuff, I know that I have a more difficult time, because of course with more education it's much easier to do that. I think even expressing yourself a lot of times is probably harder. The other thing is, I know that – it's a well known fact – that if someone has more education they're probably going to get up, even if they can't do as good a job. And certainly it has affected my confidence in myself.

Theresa describes what she had to undergo to get a raise and the insecurity she faced because she didn't have a certificate to prove she was capable of the job she was doing.

> Last year I came to my end and I decided I wasn't going to work for peanuts anymore, so it came to a battle of the forces. And I guess it came to the point where I had to lay it on the line and like I know some of the tactics I used were manipulative kinds of things but that was all I could use. I didn't have anything else to back me up really. Like something I said to John was, 'I feel like I'm not getting enough money for the position.' So of course his argument would be like any regular boss trying to keep your salaries down. So then I knew that it wasn't going to be easy. So then I had to use the arguments, and I guess I didn't really like doing that. I put him in a bind by threatening to quit. I don't know if he knew – I know John is pretty sharp but I think he didn't catch on. Things I used was, I said, 'I really feel like the board doesn't value any of the stuff that I have been doing. You don't really. You just take it for granted, all the stuff I do.' Like I knew that that wasn't really true, deep down, but I knew that that would get to the bottom of him. And it did! Like it really worked! And so I said, "The board has never ever said, 'gee, you do a good job' or 'we really appreciate the job you did,' and that makes me really uncomfortable. If somebody came in every day and said, 'gee, you're doing a terrific job,' that wouldn't make me feel very comfortable either. But nothing has ever been said and the only way that that could be said is by uping my wages. I think that's a real nice comfortable way of showing it." So then he said something, 'Well, I didn't think you really needed the money.' And I said, 'I don't think that's the issue. Like I guess where I'm starting to look at it now is, you hire all kinds of people here who have far more education than I have had, who have always made more than I have. I've worked for the place for the last five years and worked my butt off doing all kinds of things just because I was around and if something needed doing, like Theresa did it, whether it was her job or not. If it needed to be done and you weren't around I did whatever I could, and if the coordinator wasn't around I did whatever I could.' I said, 'I don't think that's really been recognized to this point. And whether it's your fault or the board's fault or whosever fault, that's the way it is. And I guess I'm to the point where I think I'm going to quit.' So that's being manipulative because I really didn't want to quit. But other people were getting more, and I guess that all came to a head after the last coordinator left. She had really started high and wasn't able to do anything and just bombed up on a whole lot of stuff. I started thinking, 'Well hey, I'm not so dumb after all. I have some qualities here and I think this is a good town.' And I started thinking too. John said, 'Well, I didn't know money was such a big thing.' And I said, "Well, I guess that's not the real reason of why I started working or I wouldn't have started at the peanuts you guys were giving. But I guess I have to look at something – what will happen if I all of a sudden became the sole supporter of myself? I couldn't exist on these wages. Then, I'd either have to start looking at another job and with my age and my background, let's face it, how much chance do I have have? And the other thing would be, I probably could get into social services and I could get a job. Like I wouldn't be afraid to try there because of the experience I've had here. I'm sure that that would be an asset. They would look at my wages and they'd say, 'well gee, you earned so very little.' Like people I think have a way of valuing things by the money thing, and that's too bad but that's the way it is."
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> So I guess the regret that I have is not being able to have a piece of paper to back me up and say, 'Yeah, she can do a job.' You have to work doubly hard I think.

Theresa felt she had no alternative but to be manipulative in order to get a raise, although she felt uncomfortable with this strategy. Prior incidents regarding her lack of education had left her feeling insecure, but more recent experience convinced her she must fight for herself and her rights to a decent wage.

> But that really makes me feel uncomfortable because I don't like doing that kind of thing. I don't think that's right that I have to fight in that kind of a manner. Like all of a sudden, the raise came easy. They felt threatened that I was going to leave. You know, I rocked the boat. I guess I had to come to an agreement with myself that I was prepared to do that. And before I made that statement I thought about it, before I got brave enough to say, 'Yes, this is what I was going to do.' But I think I had to use some measures that weren't quite on the table. I don't like dealing with issues that are sort of under the table. I think I had to use some tricks. Like I think John knew that I meant what I said. And I probably would have quit. I sat back with my arms folded, because he said, 'You know Theresa, do you realize what's going to happen to this program?' I said, 'Yeah, I've seen it happen in others. I go, the others will go too. I know what's happening. I've talked to a lot of board members and if I can be so bold as to say, when you have a good supervisor that's what counts in your program. The supervisor goes, the program goes. I've seen it; I'm not dumb. I know what's going to happen here and I feel badly because I think it's a good program. I think it's needed and I think there will be some people who will probably suffer. They're not going to die because of it. It's too bad that you guys have to look at it that way, but it looks like there's going to be no other way out.' So I think he believed me, because I know he went to see the board right quick and a decision was made right at the next meeting. And maybe because I felt secure enough by that time that I knew my fight was legal, or I had a good fight, because I think I felt that way maybe before, but I really didn't feel strong enough to fight the issue, because it was always a negative. I felt negative I guess about not having an education to back me up. It left me with a lot of insecurities. If somebody would tell you, 'Well, you don't have the qualifications,' I'd sort of suck my breath in and take it. When I did fight back I think I had enough backing or enough to stand on – some good logical explanations and arguments – because that's what I really needed. It wasn't even that hard, that difficult, to get it then. It wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be. I think I played with the idea for about three months.

The effect on Theresa, of not having developed the confidence that comes with having an education, is that she feels at a disadvantage when speaking in groups or defending herself in a confrontation. As a result she gets angry with herself, as she explains in answer to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?"

> I don't know if it's a particular dislike or if it's like getting angry with yourself because you get yourself into some certain binds or situations where I think, 'Well, maybe I could have done that better, or had I thought about it more I could have avoided that,' or whatever. I don't feel comfortable in crowds and that really makes me angry. Like if it comes to talking one to one I can talk, but get three people in a room and I have to talk, all of a sudden I feel threatened. I lose words. That just really makes me angry and it's a trait I dislike, because I don't like being put at a disadvantage and I think that's what happens to me when I'm with a crowd. I am at a disadvantage and that's not the best position to be in. I think I would like to change it. I certainly would, if there was some way of working that. I would like to work on it, that's for sure. Probably expressing myself too. I know I have a difficult time sometimes talking about what I really feel. Like the part we talked about, the raise, those kinds of situations. I wish I could express myself much easier. It makes me angry; it makes me mad and I don't like those kinds of qualities.

That the issue of not having an education is important to Theresa is validated by her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?"

> I think we talked about education wise. I know to a certain extent if I were to have a chance to have a little more education I probably could have done a whole lot of more things. So now I guess I feel powerless in certain areas. There is probably some things I would attempt to do if I had a little more education, but I know there's no sense in trying because I probably can't make it – you can't compete or whatever with someone that has a degree, for another job or that kind of thing. If it came to a job competition or in the instance of even asking for a raise, I really hesitated because I guess I feel powerless in that. I guess from what I've seen working, I see that education certainly doesn't always benefit people in the best way. It doesn't arm them with a whole lot of things that I am armed with, because of my struggles probably. There's probably more things I can foresee or am prepared for that they're not, because they come out and they feel that they have the certificate and that certificate has power. Okay, we go job hunting, you have a certificate and I don't. I may know just as much as you do but who's going to get the job? So that's power to me! And I know that there's no amount of talking or anything else that will probably ever help in that kind of an instance. So then you're powerless.

Fortunately, Theresa has come to understand that her life experience is valuable and that the power it gives her balances the powerlessness she feels not having an education.

> But my experience is also a kind of power – actually it's better because I'm probably shrewder in a lot of ways than a lot of the girls that come out of university, because they haven't had the experience and it's hard to realize some of the stuff. I think on paper it looks a whole lot different than it does right in reality kind of thing. And I'm not knocking it, because I know that if I had the opportunity, to this day – like if we lived in the city or somewhere, I'd take night courses or something to try and get that. Because then I think there's no telling what I could do, or try to do. But I know that when you don't have it, you just have to take the second seat a lot of times. But when am I going to take time off to go to University now? It's not feasible. It's probably something I don't really want strong enough either. If I did, I probably would do it. But I couldn't see myself uprooting myself for four years or whatever to go and get my degree.

Theresa experiences the unavailability of further education, which she presently experiences living in a small northern community, as another kind of powerlessness. She again comments on this being a general problem for women she knows.

> But what I would like to see, and not even necessarily at this point I guess, at my age so much, because that certificate doesn't really mean a lot because I can survive without it, I don't really need it. But there is some interest that I think I'd like to keep learning, because I think it's a good feeling when you keep learning. You just might as well die if you just say, 'Well gee, there's nothing else I really want to learn about.' If I was in a city I probably would have taken night courses in a lot of stuff and would probably have had something, but here you don't have that kind of choice. I think that's part of the problem. That's another powerless, where you feel like you haven't really got any power. I think it would benefit a lot of women if we had certain kinds of things out here that we could go into. Because even the women, you hear them talking, they're away from their job and they're raising a family and they really feel like they're stagnating. But if there was something they could continue learning on, then someday they think, 'Well gee, when my family's grown up or whatever, I'll still be able to do something, or I'm on top.' In 10 or 15 years things will probably be so far behind, but if you can keep up with some stuff like that it helps. I think that's part of the problem in this area for a lot of women.

Theresa believes that being a woman is difficult in our society because women have to fight against how others perceive them. This is a problem for homemakers and mothers who experience society's devaluation of their nurturing work, as well as for women who reject work socially defined as appropriate for women and are consequently judged as unfeminine. She describes her own experience and that of women she has worked with.

> The other thing is, like I think probably being a woman is difficult, or has difficulties, because it's always a fight, whether it's a job promotion or whatever. Like somehow if you're a woman you don't need it. But the other thing is, I think housewives are really looked down, down upon, and that really hurts my feelings, because I think like they're really important. I've seen it happen in one of the Coffee Break Sessions. You have 15 people, women, sitting around and they'll say, 'What is your profession?' I really hate when they ask that question because you see a lot of them just really wince. What do you have? Okay, 'I'm a nurse,' or 'I'm a social worker', or whatever, and then all of a sudden you'll come to the women and you can see they're just dreading it. They'll say, 'I'm just a housewife.' And I think that's terrible! Because I think they're putting themselves down – the idea that you have to be a certain thing to be good, I think that's wrong. I think being a good mother is an art. Not everybody can be a good mother or a good housekeeper or whatever. If that's what you choose to do and you like it, I think that's super. Just like if you choose to be a doctor, that's super. So I can think that will change some. I see people accepting the roles women are playing easier now than they did 20 years ago even. Like I talked about being a bus driver. That time I was only one. Now there are all kinds of women bus drivers in the area. You see women in Fort McMurray being heavy equipment operators, and some of the oil companies around here have women driving some of the big trucks. I think if you like doing that kind of thing and you're good at it, I don't see anything wrong with it. We had a case where a woman, a single parent, was trying to raise her family and she took a truck driving job because it paid a lot of money. She didn't have too much education so she was pretty restricted in the kinds of things she could do and how she could support her family. So she took this job, and there was a lot of eyebrows raised saying she wanted to go there because all the men are there and because she's single and those kinds of things. Nobody was thinking! Like I knew what she was thinking because I had talked to her often and we were helping her get established, so I knew exactly what she was thinking. She said to me, 'I have to take this job; there is no other way out. I can't get by on less than $1600 a month and this job will pay it.' I think if men don't want women to be driving truck or heavy equipment, then they should be raising the wages of the waitresses and clerks, and places where women work – secretarial positions, for example. How do they expect a secretary to live on $700 a month when a guy working in the same company needs $1800 a month to live or whatever? She may be supporting two kids like he is. So until that's all changed, we're always going to be recognized as the weaker sex or having to depend on somebody.

Theresa perceives that women are considered the weaker sex because they are forced through low wages to be economically dependent on men. However, she believes that most women have strengths (coping skills, for example) which men do not have.

> I think probably most women have more coping power than any man would ever have. In all the families we've worked with – like single parents is a priority, people that we help out with – and most of the single families is women, in the majority it's the woman that's left by herself. But there has been the odd husband that's left with the kids and we've worked with them. The woman in the case of maybe where the child was sick or something and she was having a hard time to find somebody to babysit, we send a homemaker in to help her out on that day. But she can pretty well cope with a lot of things. But we have to do a lot more to help a single parent family when it's the husband that's there. There is a lot to do in that house, like a lot of different things that we're doing. These husbands just have a real difficult time coping. I think some have struggles and they're making it and I think that's great, but in the majority of cases the woman can cope a lot easier being a single parent than a husband can. But when women change roles I think it's still frowned upon in a lot of cases. I think it's ridiculed and there's certainly a lot of people still raise their eyebrows when you see women driving a big truck. Look in Edmonton it was a couple of years ago that the women applied for bus driving. You know what happened? A similar kind of thing. Why can't a woman drive one of those buses? That's not hard! When it comes to physical kinds of things, I agree. Like I think it's crazy for a woman to even try some things physical – I think it's not good for her to begin with. She is not equal when it comes to strength. But when it comes to coping skills I would bet a woman can drive a truck and probably run an answering service at the same time. Where a man would probably only drive the truck or run the answering service, one or the other.

Theresa recognizes the problems women face both in not being recognized and valued for what they can do well and in being restricted in their alternatives. She perceives and is angry that men have the choice to be irresponsible to their families and that this irresponsibility is condoned in government policy.

> But women aren't recognized for what they can do well, and I think that's why women have become dissatisfied, and rightly so. Like how many times have they been stood up by supposedly a sole earner? The guy is supposed to be the sole earner. So what happens? All of sudden he's out or found a girl friend or run off with somebody else and so here she is left with all the kids and all the expenses. So what is she supposed to do? I know a lot of native women in the area, when they're stranded and their kids have nothing to eat, they'll go out and prostitute because that's the only way they can earn money, and then buy food with that for the kids. Like so then they get the name, these are bad women. But what are you going to do? The woman uses all of her resources to feed her family, because she is restricted in the kinds of things she can do and the amount she gets paid for what she does. You know often times they get put in the corner. Because they are restricted and there is no two ways out of it. For many women it's pretty hard to cope in this world. Some make it and some don't. I think of those that don't, I think they're dissatisfied with their lot but there's not much they can do about it, or it's pretty difficult. They don't have a chance. The other thing that really infuriates me is the welfare system. There was a big article in the Journal just somewhere in January, 1980, I think. Right on the front page it said, 'Millions of dollars saved because single mothers made to go to work.' Well when I seen that I just could have turned somersaults it made me so mad, because I thought to myself, 'Where the hell are all the fathers that made these kids? Why weren't they put in a corner and made to pay?' Big deal, so the government is so happy because they saved all this money because they made these women go to work. They could have saved it by making some of those guys go to work or maybe making them start paying for their kids, where the woman stayed home and looked after her kid or maybe further educate herself or whatever she wants to do with her life?

Asked, "What do you think about this saying: 'It's a man's world'?", she replied:

> Yeah, I think that's pretty accurate, I think, all in all. Canada has never seen a woman prime minister. Courts or the laws are all set by men. There's been very little done about that. Judges – how many women judges do we have? An odd number but very few. Most companies are – the boss or the head person is a man. So like all of the thinking and all of the way things are structured had to be the male point of view, because there are women in so few of those positions. How else can it be?

Asked, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?", she answered at greater length about the importance of the Movement, the reasons why people take extreme actions, and the need for women to assert themselves.

> I think that there's going to be some good done from it. I think it will go down in history to where, what was it – that women's suffrage bill that went in, you know for women's voting rights and that kind of thing. I think this is probably as big and is going to end up doing as much as probably those women did at that time for that particular thing. I guess I disagree with some of the radical kinds of things they do. I'm not sure they're all necessary. When it comes to the point of bra burning and the whole I think radical – oh what do you call that when they go out on the streets and they march or do any of that kind of stuff? I think there's probably other ways of fighting it. I think all that does is probably – well there's probably a little bit of a benefit to it because maybe it makes somebody stop and take notice. But I think it can go overboard and it has I think in some instances. I can't think of any right now, but I know I've seen some where I think there's probably other ways of resolving some of that. I think that just by having the publicity and having been heard, like people are stopping and listening I think more, to the Women's Movement. I think it's almost like any strike, and I don't care if it's men or women or who. Like for some reason nobody stops to take notice unless somebody gets a little radical sometimes. That's not always, and I think sometimes it can probably be resolved. And that's not saying women are at fault for being radical or whatever they're trying to put across. Nobody's stopping to listen and maybe that wouldn't be necessary if somebody would stop and take notice. So that's where I say I don't like the radical stuff myself, I wouldn't like to be involved in it, but I'm not saying that it's all wrong or it's all foolish. Like I can see some merit to it. It may be foolish, but what else do you do? It's like a kid that throws a tantrum almost. If nobody listens to him well he's going to lay down on the floor and scream and then ten-to-one, somebody will stop. I don't like that because I don't think it's a very mature way of doing things, like throwing a tantrum kind of thing, but then what do you do? Like if you try and everything else fails, you might as well try something radical.
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> I think that women have to assert themselves, or a lot of women probably have to assert themselves a whole lot better. They're probably not strong enough because of background and because of the way they've been brought up that probably the man is right, or he thinks better or he thinks more logically or whatever. I think we've been conditioned to that kind of thing. Where sometimes, if it comes to making a crucial decision, I think a lot of times a woman would waver. If there's a man maybe saying it this way and she's thinking the other way, and if it really comes to it, I think a man will very quickly say, 'Yes', and not think twice, where the woman would weigh it out a little more and be more careful in her decision. But also because she's afraid. Often times women lose because they're unsure. I think we have to try, because men have made mistakes too. Sometimes you have to do some things. You don't know if it's right or wrong and you have to make a decision and do it, and only after trying it is when you find out that it works or doesn't. So how have men learned? They have certainly made a lot of mistakes. I think that maybe in instances of family even, where men will make

> a big family decision and it's not always the best thing for the family, and maybe the wife might be thinking a different way but she's powerless or thinks, 'Well, I'd better not push my point.' And I don't think that one or the other should really be taking over – like why can't it be talked over logically and deliberated and weighed out in all areas and then a decision made together? Surely there must be another way of solving it rather than thinking, 'I am right.'

As to her own experience as a woman, Theresa feels lucky – lucky to have the husband she has, the mother she had, the upbringing she had, and to think the way she does. She recognizes that it is her own strength that enables her to see her life as a challenge and to carry on and enjoy that challenge.

> I've been lucky. And I think that partly it's to do with the kind of a husband I have, the kind of a mother I had, the way we were brought up at home, and the way I think. You have to be really, really strong to make it and I think I'm quite a strong person, and I think that's what's contributed to my whole attitude. I don't give up easily. Sometimes it gets pretty frustrating about some things, but I'll weedle my way out of it some way. It's a constant battle, I guess. But as I said before, it's a challenge and I guess I enjoy a challenge. So that's why it's been good for me and I couldn't see it any other way.

E. Madelaine

Madelaine is a 36 year old French-Canadian woman who lives on a hobby-farm in Northern Alberta close to where she was born. She was the ninth child in a family of 13 children. Her mother has a grade seven education and presently works as a superintendent of a Senior Citizens' Home. Her father, who died seven years ago, was a farmer with a grade four education. Madelaine has a grade 12 education plus secretarial training. She has worked as a clerk, a receptionist, and a telephone operator, and is presently a full-time homemaker. She married at age 21 and lives with her husband and three children ages 13, 11, and six. Her husband is a civil servant making $30,000 a year. Madelaine does some volunteer social service work in her community.

In answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" Madelaine states that being a woman has been difficult and confusing because of the changes she has seen and the different roles she has adopted. Briefly she describes a cycle she has been through: as a child she saw women being treated like slaves, as a young adult she searched and fought for her freedom and independence and now in her middle adult years she has relinquished her freedom and feels more content.

> I find this a little hard to answer because I was born in the 40's and I've seen a lot of changes. I've seen where the woman was really the slave sometimes maybe, or the man thought that he had complete control over her. I've seen some of that in the society and then I've seen the woman fighting to get her rights. I was even myself confused. In the 60's I was married and I was trying to find who I was, and I was really quite confused at that time. Then I started to fight for my rights, maybe more than what I do now because now I find myself just maybe finding who I am, so I don't need to fight. But I really did find it difficult because it was such a change. We were brought up one way and then I would see this Women's Lib trying to do completely the opposite and for me this created problems, primarily in my marriage because my husband wasn't used to this type of attitude of independence. I worked at this but now I found that I can cooperate better with him because I don't have to be independent. I'm not one of these 100 percent women's libbers. I realize that he has to be the head of the household according to me and I respect him more than I used to because I feel better about myself. So I find that this is working really better, and it's actually better for the children too. To be a woman to me is to be able to, like now I am home, I'm staying home and I'm trying to make a good home for the family, my husband and my children. And too, I'd like to offer something to society if I can make this a better world, or a better place to live in. I think women have a lot to do, and there's a lot of opportunities.
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> Before I always wanted to be away from the home as if I had to be out of here to be something good. But now I feel that I have to do something here at home first. If my home is a good healthy unit, then this sort of goes on into the community. I can also be gone, though, quite a bit and still do a good job here. Myself, I would like to help mostly the teens, or the children growing up, because a lot of them don't communicate at all with their parents. Or they just have nobody, you know. And there's a lot of areas I think that the women can get involved in and be really good at.

> Whether it's politics or whatever she chooses. So I think the woman has a very important role to play. I think she should also not be treated as if she's a slave either, and yet to me that's a touchy subject. You know, I think that some of this freedom actually can backfire a little bit. Maybe it backfired for me when I was trying to go to an extreme. Maybe I didn't have the proper perspective of what freedom was. Maybe I just had it all wrong, in a way. To be free, I can be free and yet I can be responsible or answer maybe to somebody else. But maybe I had this idea that free was just like a bird, you know, and this was where I had it wrong. I think sometimes this can create problems. Maybe in a way I was just thinking of myself only. Then if my husband or my children (which I had and they didn't ask to be born) needed me, I had to be there for them, and if I was just thinking about myself and my independence and everything, then somebody was suffering. So when I found that this wasn't all that important, I could be free, and yet, I wasn't a slave. I found the happy medium for myself. And now I am much more content.

Madelaine described in greater detail what she learned about the place of women in her childhood: that women could be treated as servants or could be abused, that their role was to bear and raise children, and that women and men didn't have much to do with each other. As an adult she was surprised to be treated as a person by men, and liked it.

> But back to when I was young, it seems to me that the attitude of some men was that the women had to be their servant, you know. She was there all the time and they just snapped their fingers and she had to do whatever. Maybe not so much my own home, but I know my step-grandfather, he abused his wife and the children - they were treated just terrible. And there's a lot of people that had this attitude that women shouldn't be heard. It was as if she had no place and this is why I think there is a problem that came about - women just resented that. They wanted to be a person, an individual, and have their rights. That's my opinion of what happened, why the women said all of a sudden, 'Listen! I'm here! I'm a person!' They had children by the dozen. Well, I think I was brought up with this idea a little bit, you know, that the woman just didn't have too much to say. My own home was sort of a quiet environment; there wasn't too much communication, but I did get the feeling somehow that that's the way it was supposed to be. And even as I was growing up, I remember sometimes there was some people gathered together, or even in the last five years, there were men talking and if a woman or even myself, if I'd speak, they'd pretend they never heard. And I thought, 'What is this?' There's still a lot of these guys around you know, that think that the woman just shouldn't be heard. And when some man, I remember in Edmonton, would talk to me as an individual, as a person, as a friend, I thought, 'Hey, this is great!' It was really different for me, and I remember how good it made me feel as a person. I was still living in Edmonton and this fellow that worked with my husband came over and usually he'd just say, 'Where is your husband?' They don't care about you. I was watering the lawn and he started to talk to me and I thought, 'Hey, this is a real nice guy, he considers me as a person.' And that made me feel very good. And I think also there was sort of that attitude that women were just the sex objects. I remember that a lot. They had children, and they were there, and they were just sort of a servant all the time. And I remembered this and that's why I think it was so meaningful to me that some men would talk to me as a person.

What Madelaine learned about being a woman was not taught directly. Rather, she learned from what she saw going on around her - her mother staying home, raising 13 children, showing no affection, giving no encouragement or information, and

rejecting her husband's caresses. As a result Madelaine felt that she unacceptable and that she was missing something.

> Mother would never talk too much about how women were treated, about them being servants or sex objects, but that's just a feeling that we did get. And then of course too, the mother was always having children and she never did go out. My mother had thirteen – eleven girls and two boys. I never heard her complain but it was just a weight. Then I remember society gave these labels all the time. If you were the man, you're up to something. You can't have this healthy relationship in a lot of environments that I know. And when I was younger I think that's what I always had in mind, that if a guy looked at a girl or talked to her it was for that. But at home it was always a hidden thing, this sex thing, as if it was bad. So that always stayed sort of in my mind, as if that's the only thing that there was, sort of, between men and women. Mother never did complain, you know, but I missed something, I know, because I had some adjusting to do myself. I was the ninth and I was searching. I wanted to be somebody. But there was all these other kids. There was the older ones that knew what to do, and the younger ones that got attention, and I was in the middle. And I remember this a lot, you know. And too, like she would never complain or make us feel bad but there was never a communication of how she cared for us, or about when we grew up – about sexuality and all that. We just had to figure it out, and we thought it was something that was to be hidden and ignored. So I grew up with this attitude. I remember, like when I had my menstruation I went to see my sister; I didn't know what was happening; I didn't know what to do. I don't recall what she said but I know she just helped me out at that moment. By then I was 16 so I probably found out at school from my friends or whatever. But I don't remember Mom ever talking about it. Ever. I didn't feel very good about it. Sort of afraid actually. In my home, we had the parents but there was never ever any affection, never between him or her. Dad, sometimes, he'd go and pull her ear or just pat her a little bit and she just didn't want us to see. That I remember. He just was being friendly, you know. He wanted to caress her or be warm, but it's as if she didn't like it. We noticed those little things. So we had a good home but no warmth. And then I grew up feeling that I was a terrible person, because we'd get so much negative.

Fortunately for Madelaine she was encouraged by some of her teachers, which helped her to feel better about herself.

> But I had some good teachers who had confidence in me and they told me, so that helped. They'd encourage me or they'd be nice to me and I knew they liked me. So it gave me a good feeling about myself, because we didn't have too much of that positive reinforcement.

Nevertheless, the damage done could not be entirely erased. In answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?", Madelaine tells how her family life affected her.

> I regret well again, like I was saying, it's probably not having a warm home, you know, the love, because I feel I wouldn't have had all these difficulties really. I really went through a lot of hard times and I know it was because I myself felt very insecure or worthless really. And this I regret in a way. I know they did the best they could but to me I guess it wasn't enough. And I regret that because I had to go through a lot of hard times bcause I didn't feel that I was anybody special or that I was cared for or anything. That I really regret. That was hard.

However, now that Madelaine and her mother can talk together about their lives, Madelaine understands the problems her mother faced. She explains that her mother had been abused by her own father and had generally lived a difficult life. Not until her husband died was she able to get close to her children. Although Madelaine herself was not abused by her father, she experienced him as distant and concluded that men and women lived separate lives and only became involved for sex.

> She had been brought up really in a bad situation and she was abused and beaten up but she never did that to us. So I was really thankful for that. And now she tells us that she cares for us. Since my dad passed away she seems as if she realizes more how we need to be told. So for her too it must have been difficult to be a woman. Because of her life and then all her children and then everything that happened to her.
> Like now often my mom talks about her stepfather. She wouldn't too often I guess when he was alive, but when he died, that was maybe 16 years ago, now she talks about it as if it happened yesterday – how he'd abuse them and their mother and the hate he had for all of them. He was mean. He was something that I can't even imagine people being. That stayed with us a little bit, you know. My dad he was very different. He was a good man, gentle, but very quiet. So men to me were always sort of distant. And all I'd see probably, in my own surroundings, were just a guy and a girl were always together, they were going out or whatever and I thought maybe that was all there was. There couldn't be sort of just a friendship. I was quite confused for awhile, growing up in that kind of environment. I guess what I learned from this was that women were to be in the home, I suppose.

Understanding her mother's life has helped Madelaine to resolve her resentment toward her mother. Asked, "What do you value in your life?", she stated:

> And I value my mom. She was my first contact with life itself. We were close and I always felt very secure in my family environment. I value her because of what she represents to me. She's 71 and yet I see her as a young person – she has such a sense of humor. I admire her because she had a rough life and yet she overcame a lot of it. I always saw her as a strong person. She was the heart of the home to us – she was just there and it's just a good feeling to have.

Madelaine left home at age 19 to find a different life in the city. Although she had a hard time sorting out who she was, she was not sorry she had left and was not afraid. She took a government sponsored secretarial course, got a job and met her husband.

> When I left my family and went to Edmonton I was 19. It was in 1962. It meant freedom I think. I always liked Edmonton. When I left my home, I think I might have had five dollars in my pocket. I told them, 'I'm going.' I didn't want to ask them for money because I had worked for a few months but I hadn't saved anything. I wasn't that type of person either. You see, things to me replaced what I needed from them. So it was things – clothing, anything. So I felt that I shouldn't ask them for money because they had done enough for me. I went to Edmonton on a bus. I didn't know anybody except an aunt. I wasn't afraid; I just went. I didn't have a job, but I must have contacted my aunt and I lived there and then I went to a training school, and ended up at NAIT at secretarial work. This was government sponsored. So I had that,

> anyway. I must have trained for about six months and then I got a job and then I went to AGT and that's where I met my husband. But I did like the city. I liked it even though it was all these people and I felt no one would ever talk to me, but I still felt I had this world there and I was okay. After I left home, I never looked back. I said 'that was it', and I never was sorry I had left. I wasn't afraid, you know, I think I just wanted to go. I wanted something different; maybe I didn't want to stay in a small town, I'm not quite sure. And yet my mom and dad were never the type to hold me back. Actually it was the opposite. We'd go out and she'd never worry about us. Just probably something different I think is what I wanted. But I had a hard time for quite a while really. I had to sort of just find myself. Like I really care for my parents a lot. When I went to Edmonton I'd write very often; I felt close anyway. But then after awhile people would tell me that it was my parents fault that I was having a hard time.

Madelaine got married without much thought, because it was the thing to do – everybody did it. Early married life was difficult, however, as she was unprepared for marriage.

> Anyway, then I got married. At that time I never even thought about it much really, this is the thing. It was just something everybody did and I'd have children and that would be it. I was having a hard time for awhile in my marriage. I couldn't adjust. Because to me, like marriage, we had never discussed it. This goes back again to the way I was brought up. We never saw Mom and Dad argue. We never saw the affection, we never saw much of anything. But we had a pretty good family relationship going. We had good Sundays, I remember that a lot. We were always close; the family was always together and company and that. But I didn't have any idea of marriage. I didn't have any idea of the problems of the different personalities or anything. I really didn't have a clue what I was getting into. Well, you just didn't think about it much. You thought it was just something you did and then it turned out to be much more complicated than that, and it turned out to be hard times for you.

Madelaine explains that she and her husband had different expectations about how a young wife should behave. Madelaine felt like he put her in a cage, just as she was beginning to find out who she was and what she wanted.

> My husband was the type of guy that if I would have let him get away with it, I think that I would have had no rights. Because I would see, like in his family or some men, they just take – they just sort of tell their wife, 'Go get me this and go get me that.' I think that's terrible. I feel that there's a way of asking and appreciating. There's this woman – the more she does, the more he expects, and she doesn't feel good. And yet she's a super gal, you know. So me, I didn't want this. I wanted to be somebody. Not *over* him, but a person, an individual. And I had a lot of freedom in a way but if he was jealous of me I felt like I was in a cage. And I'd tell him he put me in a cage and he couldn't figure out why, because I had this, I had that. But I said, 'It's not material things that really count.' It was that feeling, I wanted to be sort of free still. For a long time I really felt as if I was in a cage. Like I don't know what that would represent. But I really felt as if he had put me in this cage and I guess maybe I hadn't been ready to get married and have these children. I had never really thought of all this, you see. I was twenty when I got married. I should have been old enough. Life is quite a process.
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> But this cage, I think it probably relates to the fact that like, when I got married I had never really thought about it too much. Like unfortunately, sometimes in an education, or as a person grows, they're not really made to think about the seriousness of marriage or what is ahead and they don't really think of it. It seems that society, or a lot of kids, even my daughter, they

> seem to think that to get married is the thing. They don't care about a career. They don't stop to think of it until once they start maturing and changing, and this was what was happening to me I think. I was starting to find out who I was and I wanted to be an individual and independent, and here I was married and maybe the fact that he wouldn't trust me I felt all this was my cage. Like if we'd go someplace, or if I'd go to the washroom or something he'd look for me and he'd think I was hiding away from him or something.

Madelaine's frustration with being trapped at home added to her emotional insecurity. Nevertheless, she coped by fighting back against her husband – his attitudes, criticisms, and restrictions.

> But for myself it seems that when it was time for me to be in the home I wanted to get out and find out who I was. And now I'm satisfied to be in the home again. So, you know, being a woman, I think, especially the ones that have grown up in a time where there has been such change, I think it has been quite difficult for some. Some less, because they probably had the security and affection and they felt good, so they weren't maybe so affected by the changes, but I was because I didn't start out feeling good about myself. But I'm a little bit of a fighter too so that helped me I think.
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> I was a fighter or it made me become that type of person. I think I remember very well that I became a fighter after I got married. It was my husband's attitude towards me. Maybe I felt insecure there of who I was; and if I did something wrong he'd always say, 'Why are you doing that? Why are you doing this?' So I never took that. That's something I could never take because it was as if I was being attacked all the time. So I'd fight back, by probably saying things, you know, or if he did the same thing I'd laugh and I'd say, 'See, you did it!' And it was just something so minor like forgetting the keys in the car door; well I think I seen he had done that. So then I said, 'See you forgot it.' But if I forgot the least little thing or I dropped something, he always said, 'Why did you do it?' As if I wasn't human, you know. This I could never take. I still don't. It's like a criticism; it's as if we shouldn't make mistakes.

Madelaine also went through periods of blaming her husband's mother, blaming her own mother, and resenting her marriage and children for her unhappiness. Interested in learning more about herself and her insecurities, she read books, hoping to discover what was wrong, and began to understand her own insecurities and those of her husband.

> He was very different; I was very different and I resented that close family he had. He was brought up very different and I was the type that wanted to be very independent so I sort of created a lot of this myself I think. I think I actually disliked his mother for awhile, and this really upset me. Then I got to dislike my mother because I blamed her and it was a real terrible thing for me to go through. So then when I found out that it was his insecurity and the way I acted, well then I started to work on that too. I was always interested in finding out more about myself or getting over this or becoming more secure in my life, so I read lots of good books like on positive thinking and all kinds of good psychology books, and I tried to see where I fitted in. So that worked out to the good, but it sure took a long time. I sort of finally quit blaming the past or my mom. I accepted them the way they were.
> But they were brought up in that different type of environment where everything they did was okay sort of. And me, everything I did was probably wrong so it made me insecure I guess.
> And then I realized it was an insecurity that he also had, with himself.
> I already did resent maybe not being able to be myself which I felt, or I

> couldn't express myself. Maybe for awhile I even resented being married and having children because I couldn't cope with it. But now I'm over that.

Things are better now for Madelaine with her husband due to increased understanding and communication, although she still does not like his tendency to criticize.

> I don't think he realized just what he did to me. But now after 15 years, now he knows. So now we just say when he's criticizing. I don't get angry though, I'll just say it. Or like the children too sometimes, they notice that, so they sort of say it and he realizes that. He criticizes me and them. But they all sort of grew in it so we all sort of know what's happening. It doesn't affect the kids too much, but probably to a degree. But we talk about things like that. We talk a lot. We have to in these times.

That Madelaine realizes the value of communication in marriage but is not entirely satisfied with this aspect in her own marriage is evidenced by her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced being powerless?"

> The only times I really feel myself powerless is when I can't speak up, when I don't dare talk. Like in public or here in the home when I have feelings that I just can't talk about them. Or if I would like to talk about personal feelings but my husband can't understand what level I'm at – then I feel powerless. I feel he doesn't understand. But as a rule, not really, no. Because I sort of do my own thing and I'm quite capable of doing a lot of things so I don't feel too powerless in that area.

She explains how she has purposely given away some of her power to her husband, hoping it will increase his feeling of security. Her goal is to gain greater freedom for herself and to ease the tension in the family for the children's sake.

> I guess sometimes I would feel powerless in a way because I'm the type of person, now especially, well I'll often just sort of ask. Before I used to say, 'I'm going here, I'm going there', but now I usually ask if it's okay. And sometimes I'll let him control me because I won't go to some place I would really like to go, just to please him. There I feel powerless, but if it pleases him it pleases me and everything is sort of okay. So that's a choice I have, I guess. I find that when I do give in though I feel a little powerless. But my husband was sort of the type that's insecure in the first place, therefore, I want him to get over this because it will give me a freedom too. You know, it's rough when he has, oh I can't really describe it, so I made a choice. I said from now on I'll give him more power in a way, but I'm careful that he won't overdo it. I don't ever want to come to the day when he'll say, 'You're not going any place! Period!' I don't want that to happen. But occasionally I'll show him that I consider his opinion and I'll let him make the choice, sort of. He usually says, 'Go ahead,' but I know what he would like me to do. So sometimes I will, just to please him and it makes him feel better about himself; therefore, for me it's worth it. Because I think that if he'd feel better about himself totally, like very secure, then he wouldn't take it out on us. That insecurity he feels does affect us. It affects the kids; they notice it a lot. So now I'm working at it, sort of. But again, you know, maybe before I didn't respect him as much as I could have, as a husband. So I see it all as a byproduct of everything the way it was. So now I'm sort of giving up a few things and it seems to be working. But I'm not giving up just for nothing. It's because I'm working at something else. And I find it's working too. Because he's the type of person that, even if he knew he had a problem or maybe needed help, I don't think he'd care to go. He's proud in that way. So now that I sort of have figured it out, I think, and I'm doing something. Well to me it's really worth it. And we'll all benefit from it – the children too. I'm

> sometimes disappointed, but then I say, 'Well, its sort of worth it.' I'm not really giving up all that much, I guess, if he'll benefit from it. I guess I was always what you'd call a taker; now I've got to learn to give. Because in my childhood I was always wanting things and now I have found out that that's enough.

While Madelaine experiences a sense of powerlessness in her marriage she also sometimes experiences a sense of power. In answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?" she described how she feels powerful when she can influence her husband's plans.

> To a point. Or possibly if a person has a certain amount of power – but like myself, this is funny, there's something that happened yesterday. My husband said something and I said one word and he changed his whole plans on everything. So I was thinking, 'How come they're giving me all this power?' Only one word I said and here he'd completely changed his whole attitude, you know. And I thought, 'Hey, I'm powerful!'

Madelaine also realizes she has the power to give or withhold sexual intimacy in her marriage.

> Also I think another area is that I noticed some days, let's say my husband is not in a good mood or I'm not in a good mood. And I know that he'll want to make love that night, because he'll be a lot friendlier or else he'll do things for me, or I just notice in the way he acts. So in a way I think a woman can have power again in this area. If it's looked at in that way I think. A power to give if you decide to do that. And yet like I've never gone too much further than this but it's really as if the woman then can control the situation, or she has control. And then again, if she would refuse or say no, then again, it's her that has the control. And he would feel probably again in a different way, and yet she would be the one that is in control of everything.

Finally, it is evident by her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" that Madelaine values her husband as a companion, a friend, and a father to her children. Though she also appreciates that he gives her security, she feels that this aspect is less important, and that she could manage on her own.

> My husband is a companion; he's someone to talk with. You know I would like to be able to talk more with him about how he feels. I can talk about how I feel, but he's the kind of person that just won't talk too much about himself. I would like, you know, for him to talk to me more about himself and this way I think it would be good. But he's a good friend and he's a good father and we're friends. So I value that a lot too. And of course, it's a security too, in a way. But yet I feel that if I didn't have him any more, that I could manage somehow. I would survive. I would be okay with the children. So the security part is there too but it's not really the most important thing to me.

Madelaine's mixed feelings about her marriage are again exposed in her answer to the question, "What are your feelings about the Women's Movement?" She states that although women need freedom and rights, they must be careful and must compromise. She then describes what she thinks might be a man's perspective, explaining how her idea of husband as the head of a household has changed. Women's Liberation is fine,

she feels, as long as it doesn't go to the extreme of taking too much away from men, such as their sense of worth and their responsibilities.

> At first, well I didn't know that much about it. I thought it was okay because the women did have to have some things done for her. But sometimes I think maybe they got carried away a little bit. I'm not too sure because I don't read too much on this. But I think they have to be a little bit careful too. Like the woman, if she wants everything that the man has, she'll end up losing a little bit. She'll lose maybe just the way she's treated if that's important to her. Or she might end up finding that it's not so easy to be out there all the time. What about the women having to go to fight in the war? If they want everything, they might have to go. All this, I think it could backfire, I'm not too sure. But we did need some changes, I think. Like we needed freedom; we needed our rights as an individual, but not to step on everybody. Like I'm afraid that this is what some are trying to do. I don't know. I don't know too much about the Women's Lib. But that's sort of the drift I got from a few programs I see, but I don't really read too much about that. I think we have to compromise because that man, he is still the man and he still needs, oh, to know that he has maybe a special place even. It might help him to feel good about himself, and to feel that he is the head of the household, let's say. In reality, they are both together in this and the wife would have as much say, but yet somehow, if he feels he's still important. Maybe even, like some, not all, some can handle this very well, I'm sure. And too it depends on the communication. Like sometimes there's not too much of that. But some, they feel threatened. Like let's say his wife is making way more than he is or whatever – some, they can't handle it. Some, they end up not even going to work anymore or whatever. Too, like the family unit itself is not that close anymore as it used to be, so somehow this probably has a lot of effects I think.
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> Before I had a different idea about a man being head of the household. You see, before I thought it was just a ruler, a type of close-fisted head. And now I see it differently. I see that there are partners in a marriage. They are together; they have their rights. A woman should have her freedom of expression and have her ideas, but if they communicate about it, they can agree on a lot of things. To me the head of the household is sort of, not so much that he just controls everything, but that the man still knows that he is the boss, and yet he doesn't have to be bossy. I have a hard time to explain this. Like children, say there is the older and the other and the younger. The older is the older but he doesn't have rank over everybody else. Well then, the head of the household in a way, it's just that he's respected as that. And if he is worth the title, he will leave his wife have the freedom to be an individual. Some are really good at this but some have overdone it. I think that there's more of a give attitude on both parts if it's going to work out. I have a hard time explaining it because I think I'm one of the few maybe that feel this way. Maybe not. It's not just a figurehead. I feel that it should mean something and the man should know that it means something. Like before he was called the breadwinner sort of, and he felt that he had all this responsibility. And maybe it was diffiuclt but he still felt that he had to do it. But now a lot of things have been taken away from him really so the man probably had to adjust a lot to this. If we have responsibilities, life means a little more. We need to have responsibilities. Men still have them, but it's just that I think that they feel threatened by this Women's Lib, especially when it goes to extremes. If it doesn't, well then I can't see that it hurts them.

The changes Madelaine has witnessed in her lifetime and the rights and freedoms she is struggling for in her marriage are also reflected in her answer to the question, "What do you think about this saying: 'It's a man's world'?" She is unclear, however, about whether

or not she, herself, exercises the rights and freedoms women have gained.

> Maybe a long time ago, not so long ago, but maybe the man had so much power. Even we hear of the women not being able to vote; even in some countries still the woman can't go out in the street with her face uncovered or whatever – that's where it all comes in. I think that nowadays, to me, I don't agree with it and I think that's not exactly what's happening. Even now I think a lot of men they're just frustrated because they see they're losing sort of what they think they had control over. I think some men are actually having difficulty because they're maybe losing the way they thought it was supposed to be or whatever. But I find that the woman, to me, has a lot of rights, maybe as much as the man. That's how I feel about it. There are still some guys, I think, they're still trying, you know, to make it be as if that's the way it is. I know they still try to run the whole show as if the wife really has no rights. But as a rule, I think that we, as women, have a lot of rights and freedoms. And a lot of us are exercising them too.

Another aspect of being a woman to Madelaine is being a mother, which means to her being responsible.

> And too, like being a woman, to me with having children, I feel very responsible and I feel I can't rely on the outside world or the school to bring them up the way I want them to be. Like values and this and that. I have to do it, even sex education. I have to do it the way I believe it. So this is something that I've had to work at, but I find that now it's not bad at all. So now I see myself having a family and I tell myself that I would like to raise my children to be very well-adjusted and to feel good about themselves. Having children is a responsibility, you know? But I find sometimes people tend to get discouraged when they have children nowadays, because of the whole situation. It seems that everything is so upset in all the world, but I think that I rather look at it on the bright side of it. I'll do my best with them and hope that they're happy. And I have this hope that things are going to be okay.

In addition to feeling responsible Madelaine also experiences a kind of power over her children, as she explains in answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerful?"

> But to a point, I suppose. Because like in the home here, I have rights, and I have a certain amount, I don't know if I'd call it power – over the children. In a way I suppose it is. They'll listen but I don't really take it as a power over them. But like I say, in a way I don't know if that's really power because I don't want to be a dictator either. But they do have to listen just the same or else I'm going to set some rules in here and that's the way it's going to have to be. They may not like it but if I feel it's good for them I'll still do it. It's not easy. I'm more after them than not, but I tell them it's because I care so I have to.

Although Madelaine presently feels positive about the responsibility of children, this was not always the case. Coming from a home life where affection was not easily given, and having her first child at a time in her life when she was just beginning to be aware of the problems in her marriage, being a mother was more a burden that a joy.

> But that has been a process of unlearning too, you know. Being sort of from a cool environment I had to learn to be able to talk and to show feelings and all this. I've actually had to force myself to do things, just for my children's sake, even if I don't feel it. Sometimes I've thought it was hypocritical but then I told myself if it's something I have to learn and if it's good for them, well I'll do it. It's not easy.
> When I had my first baby, I hate to admit it, but I was too confused at that time. I had my first child a year after we were married. Like I was going through all this trauma and these changes and that was rough on her and me. I felt a great responsibility and I hadn't really adjusted to my married life and here I was having this child. And with her, you know I feel the guilt. I don't know. I think I've overcome that because I can't change yesterday. But I could have done better, it seems. But I just didn't know how, probably. Well, the last one was just a complete difference; it was like having a new baby when I had the last child. I was in a different space for the second one, and the third one. For all of them I was.

Madelaine explains how she was a different person at the birth of each of her three children – how she was much more satisfied to be home with her third child than she was with her first. Perceiving now the frustration of her friends who are home with small children, she puzzles as to why this need be the case in light of the increased number of options open to women.

> I've changed a lot in my attitudes and everything. Therefore I've wished, but that's impossible, that I would have felt this way when my children were little. I wish that I had been more satisfied raising my children and spending more time with them. But since I was, I think, immature, I couldn't handle it. Therefore, I was away. And away from home I was a totally different person. Everybody knew me as a friendly person and always smiling and so nice and I'd tell them, 'Ha! You'd be surprised if you knew me at home!' – that I got angry and this and that. And they'd say, 'You? Never!' But I would be different at home – then I was myself. I'd fly off the handle, you know. But when I had the last girl, I was at home, and I enjoyed her so much. I was really such a different person. Nowadays a woman has a lot of opportunities to be gone even if she's at home having little children. There are all kinds of programs, there's all kinds of places she can leave the children or go with them. So in a way it's unfortunate I think, that people don't know what they want, sort of. They want to get into everything. And yet to be at home, to them, they are frustrated all the time with these little ones and yet there's a hundred things they can do, or they can leave the children. It's hard to describe. I have a hard time to describe this, but it seems I see this in a lot of homes. For me it was with my first child especially. It was hard because I wasn't sure about myself. And then I was closer with the second, because then again I was changing and then the third one I was at home and I was very satisfied to be at home, but I had changed a lot myself. I had changed.

Although Madelaine feels she has changed during her adult life, and that this affects how she relates to her children, she confided that she still feels generally unable to love them the way she would like, or that society say she *should*. That she does not like this perceived lack in herself is evidenced in her answer to "What do you dislike about yourself?'

> I know there's something else I don't really like about myself and it's a lack of being able to love. Or else maybe I think I should, society or people have told me I should be this way. But I feel like even for my own children, I care for them but sometimes it's as if I feel I don't have this love that I would like to have or that should be there. That's something that I'm still sort of wondering about. But like that's the way I am, what can I do? You can't force yourself to feel things that society says. I'm doing the best I can. But sometimes I do wonder. But then if it's not there, it's not there. But you know sometimes I guess I dream of how it could be, or how I would like to be. Maybe I would like to be a little bit different and yet deep down inside I know that if I do the best I can, I can't do anything else.

Another important aspect of being a woman for Madelaine is to be a fulfilled individual – one who is valued for the work she does in her home and who is satisfied with her life.

> But what it has meant for me to be a woman? You know that's such a big question, I feel. There's so many things. But it's to be an individual, and I feel a woman has her rights to be an individual. Not to be totally independent from everything and just that big 'I' all over the place, you know. But there's a lot of possibilities in this world; she can be very fulfilled doing so many things. Unfortunately, I think too that society has made the woman or the housewife look as if she's doing really not very much. So she at home starts to feel that she's nothing and starts to feel very worthless. This is unfortunate. If she chooses to be working, fine. If she chooses to be at home, it should be a good feeling that she is doing something worthwhile. I had to work that out for myself. Before, I felt it was a search, you know. But now I'm really satisfied to be home. I feel that I'm doing okay if I can fix meals and bake and this and that; that's worth it to me. I have time to visit friends – some women that stay home with younger children. I can do things too on the side, you know, like volunteer work. Or else, like in summer, there's a lot of things to be done. But it's just too bad that there's a lot that feel that they're really useless. But for me now I find that I don't need to be gone all the time. I'm very satisfied here. That's a change that I went through though. I wasn't always satisfied. It was me though I think. It was something I needed to prove to myself, that I could do something.

Asked, "What do you value in your life?" she began be stating that she has a full life and that she is able to be happy, express herself, and help others.

> I could start with myself I suppose. What I value is to have a life that's full and that can mean a lot of things. But I feel that if I can be a good wife and a good mother according to what I feel, and make my home a good home, a warm home, and the children are happy to be in here, to me I value this. This is what I'd like for them, to feel that they can have friends here and feel good being home. I value my life and my children, and my husband. That's important. In my life, it's being able to do things. It seems that's all it comes down to. To be able to do things, you know. To be able to be just happy and to express myself. And I'd also like to be able to do some good, just encouraging other mothers or just anything that would just help some people.

Madelaine also values the changes in our country which have given women more freedom and a chance to improve their situations.

> I value the freedom that we have in this country so far. We're very fortunate I think. Like that the woman has a lot of freedom here and we're very fortunate for it. I value that a lot. I value the country we're living in. We're really a free people and there's a lot of things being done all the time to improve. If they can improve any situation for the woman, I think they're working on a lot of things.

Having choices means to Madelaine having control in her life, which in turn gives her a sense of power. Asked, "In what ways have you experienced being powerful?" she answered,

> But to have power I suppose, like to me it means I can go where I want. I feel very good oftentimes, like if it's snowing outside, 'I don't care, I'm going.' I feel powerful; I can control a lot of my life. I don't just sit here. Well, sometimes I'll feel sorry for myself like when I'm sick but I feel, yes, I do have power over a lot of things. I'm not going to just sit back and just because I'm a woman I don't think I should be there, that I'm going to stay back. If I feel like going, I handle it, I'll go. So I'm not afraid of a lot of things like that. I can handle a lot of that. So to me that's power in a way. I'm not feeling helpless in those situations. I can do things or go places, or go to Edmonton. I know like some women they wouldn't even take the truck to go outside if it rains a little bit. For me, I feel that would really just trap me. So I'll tackle those things. And I'm not really afraid of that sort of thing. If I'm sure I'd want to take a course or go places, I would go. I'll do things like that. If I feel that it's going to be good or if I'll enjoy it, I'll go. As long as it doesn't create problems because then I would forget about it. Say I'd been neglecting the children a lot or my husband would resent the fact that I'm gone too much. Then I'd have to look at just what I'm doing. But I will go to a lot of things if I feel that it's not hurting anybody, or if I'm not always gone type of thing.

She also described the power she has experienced as an attractive woman – that men notice her, try to please or assist her and appreciate the assistance she might give them. However, she explains that whereas she used to be aware of men's attention to her as a power she had, she now perceives their attention as kindness and respect, which she appreciates.

> And as a woman, it's sort of neat; we can have power I think. Like I notice there are some men sometimes they'll do something for you because you're a woman. Just because you're a woman. It's a little difficult to explain because it's probably just little things that happen here or there. I'm sure I could think of something. Yeah, like I remember this guy – it's sort of vague, but I recall I felt, 'Hey!' I thought it was okay. Probably just getting something for me real fast. Like one day we were visiting and it was time for us to go because we had left the children at home, so that the fellow at the house knew that we wanted to leave but they were talking and talking and then I just casually said, 'Well, maybe we should go', and he was up on his feet and getting the coffee right away, something we hardly ever see him do. It was sort of cute to see. But it's probably just because, maybe he likes me so he figured well we'll do this right away, and it was to please me probably. And I was pleased. I noticed it. So we sort of chuckled about it. Or the other day we were out in all this snow. We got out of a meeting and these two men – well they were stuck actually, so we as women ventured to help them. We pushed their little car. So they must have appreciated it too, so they came and cleaned off all the snow from our car and then they said we'll show you where to go. So this was just probably a recognition of the fact that we had gone to help them and they wanted to help us out. So we felt good knowing that they

> were willing to help us. Sometimes some men will open doors for you and I think it's just because we're women. I am glad to be a woman. I like being a woman. Sometimes if a person is attracted you think, 'Oh well, I look good! They like me!' Or else, if it's just a kindness or they do it because you are a woman, it's as if they want to be nice; they respect you and they want to make you feel good. Most of the time I think men are there because they want to nowadays, not because they have to. So it's a good feeling. It makes you feel good. You're pleased; you're happy, either because somebody's showing you kindness or respect, or finds you attractive. And so it's reinforcing to you, and that's a feeling of having power – when somebody has to please you. This is a funny thing. Maybe before, when I was going through all this hard times that I've talked about, I would have thought, 'Hey, I have power', because I might have needed that reinforcement. Now I probably look at it more as a kindness. You know it seems I've come down where I don't need to be proving things. I feel good enough about myself. I think that before I would have seen it more as me being powerful because I was attractive, but maybe I would have needed that more. Now I don't so therefore I see it differently, because now I feel good about myself. So if you do it I appreciate it, but I don't say 'Aaaahhh!!!' I don't have this control over you, sort of. Now I look more as if I appreciate it. I'm glad they'll do it.

Madelaine also feels a sense of power when she speaks out in public for what she believes in an attempt to effect change.

> I feel powerful I suppose when I speak up for what I believe in. Sometimes I'm shy. Sometimes I'm afraid. But when I do speak up I feel good. I'm not so sure again that this is power. I've never looked at it much in that way. But when I am able to speak up then maybe something will change because of it or people will change. Then I feel great about it. It's a form of power. People will change their minds because of what you said or what you were.

Conversely, when she does not speak up, Madelaine feels powerless, as she indicates in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced being powerless?"

> In the public situation, if I'm afraid to speak up, then I don't feel so good about myself because I feel that if I have something to say then I would like to share it. Then when I can't do it I really feel that I let my shyness take over. Or pride I suppose, you know. Just being too afraid to speak up.

Not acting on her own behalf, asking for her husband's permission, being unable to communicate with her husband or unable to speak out in a group leaves Madelaine feeling powerless. Other than facing sickness or death, however, these are the only ways she experiences being powerless.

> I guess I also feel powerless when I'm sick. When you're facing sickness or death or whatever, then we're very powerless. But as far as for the other areas, there's nothing really that I can think of.

That the aspects of Madelaine's life that she values are the freedoms available to her but not necessarily freedoms she acts upon, a chance for a full life which she experiences more as a potential than as an actuality, is hinted at in the way she has talked about freedoms and options for women in general, instead of in terms specific to herself. That Madelaine has not taken advantage of the opportunities available to her, and

that she blames herself for a lack of achievement is evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?"

> Lately, I've thought about it and I dislike the fact that I can't sort of go ahead and do things. It's maybe not too much but I feel like now I'm home I could maybe look to do something. I could go out and work, and be home pretty well a lot for the children, but I'm sort of just on a seesaw. I'm not too sure what I want to do. Or else I think of taking a course, like at the University of Athabasca or whatever, and for a year and a half or two years I've thought about it. And in the past too, I remember often times, like at school, I had the brains to get the marks but I couldn't be bothered to study. And then I was sort of sorry because I could have maybe gotten my senior matric. So to me, I sort of think of myself probably as a failure because I could have done a lot better in a lot of areas but I sort of sloughed off or I never had that determination. I dislike that. I don't have it. And that's usually concerning like achieving for myself. As if I feel I can't do it deep down inside. I have this feeling that I'm not able to do it.

Another indication that Madelaine blames herself for her dissatisfactions is found in the following passage.

> I dislike the way I sometimes cannot control my temper. This I dislike a lot. I can get angry but sometimes I get too angry, and then I look at myself and I say, 'Well , what's going on?' I have to see just what's happening. I've worked on that and I've managed to find out just what was happening.

That Madelaine feels some dissatisfaction is again evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" She speaks of her memories of close family relationships and the friendships she has made after a period of loneliness. However, she appears to judge what she finds valuable as limited, and expresses a sense of sadness about that.

> And memories I value, the good memories of good times and people. I value that a lot because nowadays people don't have time for each other as much. Everybody is so busy I feel. They don't really have time as much as they used to. People are getting to be not so important. It's things or achievements or goals or position. That makes me sad though. I think of my family quite a bit. We were quite a few, but unfortunately because of distance, we're also far apart and somehow we have sort of not kept our close relationships, especially a few. The ones closer to me I used to be quite close to, but now that's changed with everyone having their own family and that. I have one sister close by and I see her as often as I can and that's important to me, because she is my sister and we have quite a bit in common. If I know that she'll be free for lunch when I go to town I'll probably see her once a month, but they're very busy in their social life, so that I had to accept. At first I found it hard because we don't go out as much. Our children are younger. So I've had to face the fact that we weren't going to see each other that often. But I'm really close to my younger brother because he communicates with me. We talk a lot. When I first moved here I was quite lonely, I always felt like an outsider because it's a very close community and everybody is related to each other. So I felt quite lost for awhile. But now I have other friends - a sister-in-law that I feel is my sister and some other friends that we have good relationships. Friends are a support. I feel that I have someone that I can talk to. I also feel good because in most of these cases it's a friendship where I can help them, they can help me. It's a two-way type of friendship. And I find that I like the older people a lot too around here. I

> get along with them. That's really it because I find for myself that sometimes people will ask questions, and it seems that there's so much I want to do and when I really try to think what is really meaningful to me, a lot, there's not all that much for me. That's too bad maybe for me.

Asked, "What do you value in yourself?" Madelaine again demonstrates her disatisfaction. Valuing her potential, the creative and supportive qualities she has developed, and the further she senses, she describes her search for meaning. At the same time she judges herself for being weak, for tending to give up her dreams and for not valuing herself more.

> Just myself in a way, because I'm very fortunate. I've got an intelligence and I've got my senses and everything I value. There's a lot I value, my health, and just my life. I feel that there's a lot in it for me. And now I'm trying to find more of the meaning to my life. I'm sort of a person that I have to be pushed sometimes to do things or achieve my goals. I'll have these great dreams but I tend to give them up. That's a weakness, you know. So I'm trying to find more meaning so I have a goal to look forward to. So I just value my friends, or my family – people.
>
> What about myself? I value that I'm able to do things. Like I'm creative quite a bit so I can do all kinds of arts and crafts and I sort of like that. It's an expression for me, I can do these things. And it probably makes me feel good about myself too. And I also value the fact that I'm interested in reaching out to people, I guess, and sometimes if I can encourage somebody or help them feel better well, I'm glad I can do it. I don't know if there is anything else. I guess I don't have a very big price tag on myself.

F. Christine

Christine is a 37 year old woman, born in Alberta of Italian and Norwegian heritage. Her mother has a grade eight education and is a chamber-maid. Her father also has a grade eight education and is a mechanic. Christine is the eldest of eight children. She was married at age 21, separated at age 30 and divorced at age 35. She is presently living with her two children ages 15 and 13. Christine has a grade 12 education plus a two year auto mechanics course from a technical school. She has worked as a clerk-typist, printer, sales-clerk, demonstrator, homemaker, pipeline maintenance operator, auto mechanic, and currently is selling real estate. Prior to her latest job she was making $14,000 a year. Since getting into real estate seven months ago, she has made $12,000. Christine belongs to a political party and to a feminist action group.

From her answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" we learn that for Christine, being a woman has been a struggle. She feels that as a child she was unprepared for life because she wasn't encouraged to do anything except get married. Even though she worked at jobs from the age of 13, she was just biding time until the right man came along, as were her girlfriends.

> Well, it's kind of in some ways been a struggle. It seems like I've always had to try really hard to do things in my life. To have other people see me as a strong individual, that I can look after myself and that I would be able to do all kinds of different things. I've done a lot of different things and it gets easier all the time. I don't think I was very well prepared in my childhood for what I was to meet later on in my life. Basically I was just prepared to grow up and be somebody's wife. I wasn't given any encouragement to get a good education and I didn't have things in my life to stimulate any thoughts about what I could do with my life. I just assumed that what I would do is grow up and be married. So that's what I did. I guess I mostly just learned to expect that that's all I would do from seeing my mother. That's what she did. And all the other women around at that time. I didn't know any women who had careers or were involved in anything else but a family life, being mothers. All my girlfriends' mothers stayed home and looked after the kids. And all my girlfriends, that's what they wanted to do to, was to grow up and get married. That seemed to be the common goal. It wasn't until I got to high school that I realized - I was taking a business course, and I realized that I could get out and get a job. Although my mother did work as a cleaning lady for different places and I used to help her and I did have jobs right from the age of 13 to go out and earn money to support myself because my family didn't have any money. But that was always sort of biding time I suppose until I met the right man. I remember this one fellow that I went out with, he always told me that, oh, I was going to meet someone who would, like Prince Charming as he called it, who would look after me and would take really good care of me and I wouldn't need anything else. And I believed him. I really thought that that was it. I worked when I got out of high school - I worked at jobs but I never really tried to achieve anything because I didn't think there was really anywhere to go. So I didn't push myself.

Life was a struggle for Christine, even as a child. She grew up in a poor family with eight children, and as the eldest daughter was given much responsibility. She had no time for anything except physical work.

> I was the oldest of eight children, and had a lot of responsibility. I had to look after the family; I looked after all my brothers and sisters. I was really a very responsible kid. My brothers didn't have the responsibility that I did. I had to look after them. Nothing was expected of them. They didn't have to make the beds; they had to do the dishes once in a while and maybe take out the garbage but they didn't have to do any of the housework. I mean me and my mother did it all. For all these people! And that was cooking and the baking and the ironing. They never did any of the ironing. And we were just a year apart, the first five kids were all a year apart and then there was a couple of years in between the next three. So when I was 12, my little brother was a baby. But he was a neat kid and I kind of enjoyed part of it. I have very fond memories of my youngest brother and my little sister too who was a couple of years older. She was real cute. I remember when she was born. So there were good memories, but there was always so much work to do, so much physical labor, and that took so much time. There wasn't any chance to sit around and read or whatever and there were never any books at our house anyway to read. I don't think I – I mean I'm not a reader now and I don't know why that is, but I know I never had any stimulation to do that. I would always spend my time doing physical things. Doing the work around the house that had to be done. There wasn't any time for leisure particularly. Then when I was 13 I was out working as a waitress, washing dishes and peeling potatoes in a restaurant. Doing that sort of thing. Then from then on it was just one job after another. In the summer I delivered magazines and papers and in the winter I was always working at some little job. When I was about 11, 12, 13, in there, I really started to see what was happening; that I was expected to work and my brothers weren't. But my mother would always tell me I was lazy because I just wanted to lay around sometimes. I never really thought I was lazy because I was always doing something. I remember thinking, 'This isn't fair! Those guys get away with murder,' so to speak. I felt some kind of a resentment, I think. But I don't remember ever saying anything about it because it was just expected. It seemed like it was the same way for my friends as well. The boys didn't have to do any of the household duties.

Becoming a woman at puberty was mostly a positive experience for Christine, despite the initial lack of understanding and support she experienced with a camp counsellor. Although Christine's mother did not prepare her for menstruation and gave her no information about her developing sexuality, she did treat it matter-of-factly and Christine felt happy about growing up.

> When I first started menstruating, I was away at summer camp and I got these cramps and I thought I was sick with stomach flu or something. I didn't know what was wrong with me. And I didn't really know what to expect or anything. I didn't have any knowledge really. I mean I knew that my mother did that, but I wasn't educated to know when that would happen for me. My mother had never discussed that with me. And so I was at camp and was supposed to be doing something but I felt so sick that I just went to bed. And I remember one of the counsellors saying to me she thought I was being a sissy, that I was just making all of this up and there was really nothing wrong with me. And that hurt my feelings. I wasn't really a complaining type of person. I thought I was really getting sick. Because that first time that it happened, nothing really happened physically to show what was going on.

> And then the next month I started to menstruate. And I thought, 'Hey, that's what was wrong with me.' Because it was all exactly the same symptoms and everything and I remember being quite happy about it, and thinking, 'Oh, wow, that's okay!' So I felt pretty good about that basically. But I remember it being a painful kind of thing and really when it first happened I really didn't know what it was. I was sort of bewildered or whatever. I told my mother and that was fine. She told me what to do and so on and so forth, but after that nothing was really said. That was just, life goes on. It wasn't made a big thing of or anything like that. To me it just meant that I was getting older. I don't think that I had any real deep thoughts about it; it was just kind of a practical thing of growing up. I know I felt generally kind of happy about it, but I didn't have any particularly great thoughts about it. I never even thought about getting pregnant or whatever. It never occured to me that you could. I found out about that later on, by reading in books, reading different books. That's where I pretty well learned everything, just by reading in magazines and books and so on.

Christine's relationship to her mother was limited by the amount of time and energy it took both of them to care for a large and poor family. Generally, it was characterized by her playing the role of protecting her mother from her violent and alcoholic father.

> You see, my father was an alcoholic. He had a lot of problems and he was a violent person when he drank so he was very hard on my mother. So I grew up with that until I left home when I was 18 because I couldn't stand it any longer. I was always protecting my mother. That was my role, to make sure she didn't get killed. And that was always the role of my brothers as well – all of us kids, because we had to watch out for her that she didn't get hurt. It was very terrifying because there was a lot of that. Every week there would be something. So I didn't relate to my father very well because I didn't see him as being a particularly good person. He was just a person who had a lot of problems that I had no way of coping with – to know what to do or what he could do. I remember I just kept wishing that something could happen that he would see the light, so to speak. But that never occured and they finally divorced when I was 24. So that role of being the protector of my mother and the one who would chase my father away all the time, didn't end until I was about 26 when I finally told my mother I just couldn't look after her anymore. I mean I actually had to say that! I could not do it anymore! I had my own family to look after and I was too tired. I was exhausted! But it didn't really hit me until I had my own family.

Not surprisingly, Christine's relationship to her father was neither positive nor supportive. More than that, it was extremely destructive because he abused her sexually, leaving her feeling helpless and powerless.

> I didn't have much of a relationship with my father. I think he saw me as a sexual object and that was the way he treated me. He was always handling me, that type of thing. I felt ashamed of myself, and I felt ashamed of him. I didn't know what to do about it and it would usually happen when my mother wasn't around. I was afraid to tell her about it of course. I didn't tell anybody about it until finally I just wouldn't let him do that anymore. I finally just pulled myself away. By then I was probably around 12 or 13, somewhere around there. It must have been going on for about four years, something like that. I think it seemed to me that he was starting to bother my sister in that way too – she was younger than I was – and then I really started to get upset about it and I confronted him with it and it stopped. But even after that, especially when he got drunk he would, if there were people around or whatever, he always wanted me to sit on his lap, or make some comment about my big ass or whatever. It was not very respectful. I don't know, I just can always remember trying to understand him and not really knowing what to do about

> it. I was feeling so helpless and powerless. Feeling powerless, not being able to do anything about the situation. This feeling still comes back to me at times in different relationships – with my children, especially with my children. They're acting a certain way and then I don't know what to do. That kind of powerlessness keeps coming back to me. But I'm aware of it so that's okay. So I sort of felt afraid of my father for a lot of the time too. I didn't trust him.

Christine mentions that the feeling of powerlessness still comes back to her in different relationships. That this feeling is largely one from the past, however, is validated in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerless?"

> Sometimes in relationships. I don't feel very powerless very often, but sometimes in a relationship when things aren't going right with someone that you love, I find sometimes there I can feel not very powerful and pretty weak, until I get it all figured out, or learn about the situation. In certain situations like that I can feel powerless, but other than that I don't. When I do stupid things, when you forget something or do something silly or you make a stupid mistake or something like that, then I think, 'oh God.' But I don't know if that's powerlessness.
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> Sometimes there's situations that you can't change, like my family. I feel powerless. I felt powerless about being able to do anything about that. But I think that's probably about the only thing. Right now I just don't run into that very often. Most situations can be handled one way or another, if not correctly the first time, then catch it the second. I don't feel powerless too much.

Christine's experience in her family is by now largely resolved. She likes and respects her brothers, and understanding the difficult life her mother experienced, she resents her less.

> But I liked all my brothers; they were all pretty nice. And now I really respect them, they're really neat guys and they've really come out of it thinking pretty well of themselves, which is terrific because he didn't set much of an example. Mom didn't really set much of an example either for me. Sometimes I resent that, but then, the way I look at it now, God, there was just so much to cope with that was happening right then and there. I mean you couldn't do anything else. There was no energy. She had her hands full. Her life has really changed since she left him; she's independent and doing pretty well right now. But her life had been hard.

However, at one time the effect on Christine of having to take care of seven brothers and sisters, having to protect her mother, and of being abused herself by her father, was devastating. The necessary repression of her own feelings in order to survive developed into a depression which began when she left home and persisted throughout her marriage. The marriage had its own stresses: babies to be cared for, part-time jobs to support a student husband, and a feeling of alienation in the housewife role.

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> Since the age of 18 or 19, just before I met my husband, I had been depressed but I didn't know what was happening. It was just about when I was about 19 or 20 when I was going with my husband. So I started into therapy and I didn't stop until I left my marriage. And that was nine and a half years later. I was always in therapy one time or another, for one reason or another, because I could not cope. I could not get rid of this depression that was just invading me, my mind. It was getting very serious towards the end of my marriage. I was just down totally all the time. I felt there was nowhere for me to go somehow. I didn't feel that I was worthwhile because I wasn't out doing anything, I wasn't working at anything in particular as far as a career is concerned, I always sort of thought 'Oh yeah, that's what I'd like,' but it would have been too much for me to do, what with having a family and looking after the house and my husband. I felt I just couldn't cope with it physically. My husband was going to school and I worked at jobs part-time to help him through school and everything, but I was exhausted. I just couldn't cope with it and having babies and so on. I think I couldn't make real contact with people - let them know who I really was. I couldn't seem to somehow communicate that to other people or find people that I could really be myself with in the society that I was living in, you know, as a suburban housewife.
> I used to try being the perfect housewife, cooking the best meals, keeping the cleanest house, having the prettiest children, looking the most well-dressed. And the entertaining and being charming and gracious and all of that. The expectations you lay on yourself because somewhere along the line you've picked it up that that's the way you're supposed to be. I was doing everything that was expected of me. I was doing a darn good job! I was working really hard! It was like that was my work; that was my career. I tried to give it some meaning by turning it into some kind of a career. But it wasn't fulfilling. I was working real hard at it, but I just couldn't make anything out of it, couldn't find any meaning in it.

During that time Christine became pregnant for the third time, and desperate not to have another child, tried to abort herself.

> When my son was three months old I got pregnant again and tried to give myself an abortion. I did not want to have any more children because it was difficult for me to cope with the two that I had. I had planned having only two. Anyway, that didn't work and I got an infection so then I had to have a D and C. My doctor was furious with me, that I would take such a risk. I felt guilty but at the same time I felt that I wasn't going to have any more kids and no one was going to make me. I knew what I could handle emotionally and it wasn't another kid. All my life it's been very difficult for me to raise my kids and it still is. This was pre Women's Lib and I didn't know where to go or who to see for help. I'm sure I must have read about it somewhere so I just tried it myself.

Having to be always responsible for a family since she was a child, feeling dissatisfied in her marriage, and feeling isolated in the suburbs, Christine became even more depressed. Her new awareness that as a woman she might have an alternative made her excited, then unhappy, and finally stimulated her to make some changes.

> I didn't realize how much of a burden my family life had been until I had my own children and I found out that I just couldn't cope. It was too much for me! I had been doing this all my life! I had the responsibility for my own family and my mother and there was all this heavy, heavy business from my childhood that didn't really hit me until I got married. It might have been part of what was causing my depression - sitting on all this. So I got most of it worked out but not until I left my own marriage. I couldn't seem to do it. Within that it was too confining somehow. I had to get totally away from

anything that even resembled the past, so to speak. Besides, there was nobody to talk to about it, being so isolated. I mean in the suburbs you're terribly, terribly isolated. It's no comparison to living in the country. I mean in the country you have nature and fresh air and you have other things that you can relate to, but in the suburbs I just didn't have anyone – no people that I had anything in common with. Because I didn't agree with all these women. Like they were an attachment to their husband; they weren't individuals, they were an extension of this man. And I couldn't respect them very much. And I hadn't met any women who had careers or were individuals particularly. Until I went to university and then I met this woman who was my English teacher and she just blew my mind. This professor, she was so young and doing this and I thought, 'Wow! There are women out there doing these sorts of things.' So I was very keen to get out and try for myself. What could I do as an individual? Because I had felt kind of like someone in a jar with a lid on it. That kind of a feeling. And when I broke out of my marriage it blew the lid off.

It's like I never even started thinking that much until about 10 years ago when the Women's Movement started here in Edmonton. And it pointed out that women were doing all kinds of different things, that I never even thought of, that women could do. And it really stimulated me. Then I started to be very unhappy.

Christine pinpoints specific experiences involving women's groups and women friends that precipitated her leaving her marriage and suburban lifestyle.

In about 1970–71 I got involved with a group of women who were just getting together to talk about their experiences, just like many women were doing at that time. I got a chance to express myself and I became more relaxed with others and myself. And around that time I met a woman who was my chiropractor's wife, and she was divorcing and we became friends. And she introduced me to the commune and the people there and to another therapist. She was a psychologist and she really turned my head around. She really enabled me to express all the sadness and pain I had felt in my past and I was very deeply moved by the experience. It got me really in touch with being a human being and why I am the way I am. That really was a turning point for me. She showed me what was going on down deep inside. And she was a strong woman and a feminist and just by her example I think she helped me. And at the commune I met Jan and it was love at first sight.

Recalling the different therapists she has seen over her lifetime, Christine explains how they varyingly helped or abused her.

The first psychiatrist I ever saw helped me to express my sadness. It was after I had broken my back. That's when my emotional problems started to come out. It seemed like I couldn't keep up my hopes and dreams for a better life in the future when that happened. I'd been so happy–go–lucky before then. I explored all my past with her, but I moved away in the middle of therapy. The second therapist I saw was a blind social worker. He helped me just by being so nice and understanding. And the fact that he was blind and 'out there,' he was a good example to me. Another social worker I saw became a friend, so then I didn't need her as a social worker anymore. She helped me with my illness because I was sick all the time with kidney problems, a hysterectomy, etc.. I was in the hospital a lot. That had a lot to do with my emotional problems. We moved again and a third social worker helped me with my kids. I was having a lot of trouble with my son when he was about two. He was always running away and taking his pants off and stuff like that, and she helped me with my frustrations, which were high then. About a year after that I was going to see a psychiatrist – he was an older fellow in a practise with several reputable men. So we were going through therapy and gradually he started putting his arms around me and kissing me and became quite lecherous. All this time he was telling me that I needed a

> father. This happened a couple of times so I stopped seeing him. I thought of reporting him but I didn't. I was scared that nothing would be done because he would deny it and it was one person's word against another's. And I didn't want to go through the hassle, thinking it would be quite a bit of trouble to prove it. But I thought about it more times after and thought I should have done something – reported it – in the sense of standing up for women's rights. I guess it was my first involvement with sexual harassment. But it was about ten years ago. It galled me that here you are, going to seek help from someone in a trusting position, to straighten out your mind, and they put another kink in it.

Christine finally made the decision that in order to develop as an individual and discover what made her happy, she would have to leave her marriage and lifestyle and try something else. The result was that for the first time in her life she relaxed and learned to not be always responsible.

> I mean, I just couldn't relate to it and finally I just got out. I saw that as the only way of being able to find myself, was to leave my marriage and try something else, try being on my own for awhile, or with different people. I met Jan and various other people that were into – well, they were the first people that I met that I could really communicate with. So I decided to leave my marriage when that started to happen for me. I was into some pretty heavy therapy at that time, right at the end of my marriage, the last six months, and it just brought it out, because I really wanted to. I mean I was excited. I saw all kinds of things that could happen and a whole new world out there and I didn't want that suburban trip anymore. I wanted to get out and discover what was there for me with these other people and I've never regretted it. Ever! It just totally changed my whole life. And I changed as a person. I started thinking for myself about what I really wanted and about what I felt was going on in the world. I used to just go along with things. I still have a tendency to do that sometimes and it kind of bogs me down, but I just started to feel different parts of myself coming out. More of the child-like part of myself, the person who just wanted to relax and not be so responsible all the time. And it was almost like taking time out for a couple of years just to discover all of the parts of me that were never really discovered because I didn't have much of a childhood.

The communal setting where Christine lived offered her a chance to experience herself freely – free from sex roles, free to learn new skills, free to express feelings and free to become comfortable with her body.

> When I first left my husband I moved to a commune where I lived with anywhere from ten to twenty people at any given point in time, for two and a half years. I had my own room, my own apartment, and then my own cabin during all that time, so I was living on my own but still sharing with other people. And the men and women I met there were just so totally different from any other people that I had met up to that time in my life. It was like there were no sex roles. There were no roles of what a man was supposed to be and what a woman is supposed to be. It was just people living together and that just blew me away. I mean I was doing all kinds of things I never thought I could do, such as fixing my own car, building my own place to live, doing electrical wiring, doing plumbing, working in the garden, looking after the chickens, and milking the cow and looking after the pigs and all the animals we had. Everybody did everything. There weren't any rules that the men had to do the heavy work and the women did the light work. Everybody did everything. The men cleaned and cooked as much as we did. That was the first time I ever ran into that and it was very enlightening. It was wonderful! It was like I wasn't looking at a man through all my past eyes. I

> was seeing all kinds of things – I mean these men cried, openly. The men had anger, the women had anger, people dealt with it as a group. We talked it over; we shared all kinds of different experiences. We all did therapy together. We had a rehabilitation program for young boys out there for a year, helping them to cope with getting back into society. And men and women worked on that equally. And just discovering myself doing all kinds of things that I had never really even dreamed that I could do but somehow always wanted to. It was like total freedom!
> There was freedom to become more comfortable with your own body, because there wasn't any reason to be shy, because there was nothing to hide, so to speak. I mean certainly nobody flaunted anything, sexuality or anything like that, but there was just kind of a casual comfortableness being together in certain situations. We'd have massage groups or maybe go swimming in the river without clothes on or have a sauna together without clothes on and that felt fine. It wasn't the bad thing that I thought it was. I relaxed! I relaxed and I got rid of a lot of the old ideas that I had that I grew up with, and I was very, very glad. I don't know if the word enlightened is really the word to use, but freeing. It was a very freeing experience.

Christine believes that the experience was good for her children too.

> And the kids were the same as the adults. They had their responsibilities too. They had things that were expected of them and the adults helped them to deal with that. The children called you by your first name because you were relating to them as individuals. It wasn't just me with my two kids calling me Mommy. It was everybody sharing together. My kids had all these people to relate to as well as to me, and they just flourished. They got into all kinds of creative things and it brought out all kinds of wonderful talents that they had, that never would have been explored I don't think had that situation not occured.

Christine and her children moved off the commune onto an acreage with another woman and her children. They maintained separate households but worked together at rennovations, taking care of animals and generally surviving in the country.

> And then after I lived there for two and a half years, I moved with another woman and her two children to an acreage where we had two separate houses. And there we were totally on our own. We moved the house up there, we put in the plumbing, we did all the electrical wiring, put furnaces in, started tearing the house apart and never got them totally back together because we moved, but we made a really good start. And looking after all the animals – I got into horses and I learned that part. Something that I'd always wanted in my life was to have a horse. And then I had four and I was so happy I didn't know what to do with myself. And we had goats and chickens and we provided some of our own food and had a garden. So it was really an experience of living off your skills, and that really showed me that I could survive in this world. So I mean if I could do that there I could do it anywhere. And now that I'm back in the city it doesn't hardly bother me, as long as I can keep the food on the table. So the thing for me that I'm doing is concentrating on my career to keep that happening and pretty well everything takes care of itself. Because I'm fairly well organized. I learned how to organize out there.

Discovering who she was when she left her marriage, also meant to Christine discovering that she was sexually attracted to women. The experience of being intimate with and living with a woman was very positive for her, and she learned for the first time about loving and caring.

But going back to the original question, what has it meant for me to be a woman, I think that one of the things that I left out was the time in my life when a big change happened for me, when I left my marriage and I went to live with another woman.
For me, it seems pretty much a choice, though I can remember towards the end of my marriage I was fantasizing a lot about what it would be like to be with a woman. This was just a continual thing that was pressing on my mind. Then I met a woman who was a lesbian and was interested in getting to know me and I was certainly interested in getting to know her. And we stayed together for seven years and had a pretty good relationship I think, all around. It certainly taught me about what really loving someone was all about. I don't think I really knew before that. That was certainly a choice on my part. I did have my doubts during the early years of that relationship about whether I was really gay and I probably do even now to some extent. But I really wanted to be there; I really wanted to experience that relationship to its fullest because it was just so much more positive for me than any other experience that I'd had in my life up to that point in time.
Physically I found her very attractive because she was soft and warm and very – I keep using the word understanding, which I consider to be a female quality I guess. Something about being a woman. I don't know if it's motherly or whether we're searching for a mother or what – if there's anything like that. But it felt like that at times. I suppose in most relationships sometimes you feel motherly, sometimes you feel like a child. And there was room for all of that. I could be childish and talk about how I felt and it was understood and accepted. Acceptance! I could be anything that I wanted to be, any way that I wanted to be and it was understood and accepted, which I think is probably a pretty motherly sort of quality or fatherly quality that people have about them, when you're in a relationship. I guess that's what I liked about it the best because you could just explore all kinds of things and you weren't going to be thought of as some sort of a weirdo, like, 'I don't want you to do that if you're going to be going out with me,' and things like that. I mean you could just do whatever you wanted to do, or be whatever you wanted to be, with no judgements. So I guess if that's a motherly quality then perhaps that was part of what it was; or like sisters. I felt very close. I wasn't that close to my own sister but I felt that I was with her. And with some of the other women that I met, for that period of time. It was something that I needed at that time very much. Now I don't feel like I need that quite so much anymore. I feel it might be a time to go on to other things – it's hard to say.

The relationship Christine developed with Jan was much more than physical. They could talk, share their feelings, understand their common problems as single parents, work and learn together, and they respected each other. Christine in fact felt more acceptance and support from Jan than she had with her husband.

We could talk. We could talk about what we were feeling. And I knew she would understand what I was feeling because she had had similar experiences. There was just more of an understanding of what was really happening and she understood the different strains, like raising children. She had children too. She knew what that was like, the stress of raising children, the problems that you encounter with that. She really understood because she was doing it herself and we could help each other. She was into exploring different parts of her creativity and it got me into my creativity. She was an artist and did pottery and could do pretty well anything. She could fix an engine, she could do anything she put her mind to, which I really admired. I thought, 'Hey, this is really something! Here's somebody who will try anything – is really adventurous!' It really opened up a lot of doors for me. That's why we enjoyed being together, because we had lots to talk about. She was willing to relate to my kids as friends and I could relate to her children as friends as well. We sort of helped each other raising the children. If there were problems, we could sit down and discuss it and we

> would have meetings as a family and discuss problems that were happening between children or between one of us with one of the children. It was all dealt with fairly objectively, although sometimes it's pretty hard when you're involved with it emotionally. Still, having another person who was interested in dealing with those problems was important. She wasn't off at work dealing with other things. She had time to put energy into the relationship right now, and that was a really positive thing. My kids and her children got along relatively well. They had their moments when they didn't but I think basically they were quite fond of each other. Now that we're not together we still correspond and that sort of thing. She just had time and energy to give to my kids which I really liked – much more so than their father did.

Christine spoke about how special Jan was to her at that time in her life.

> I guess in that relationship with her I learned a lot about what life was all about somehow. Just a general learning period for me, because of the kind of person that she was. There were lots of discussions about subjects that I'd never even thought about before or had much to do with. Just lots of discoveries about life and about nature. We lived in the country so it was very adventurous, kind of a homestead trip that we were into, and feeling that we were capable of getting along on our own without too much assistance from other people, but yet still willing to take the help and also being able to give back in other ways. So it was really fulfilling. I'm really glad I had that experience in my life. And I'm glad I met Jan. I think it's probably pretty hard to find the right combination for each individual. It seems like you don't run into it very often in your life. You run into it once or twice but I don't know, I don't think you run into it very often. Not that special, special kind of person.

That she still looks back fondly to the time when she cared for someone who felt special, is evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?"

> I don't know if this has any relevance, but I suppose my relationship with Jan – I would have liked to have seen that work out a little bit better, for us. Because I think that was a really valuable relationship for me. I mean I could go back to it anytime and be quite happy. And if it would work out some day that that would happen, I would do it. Because it was really a positive relationship for me in many, many ways. Although I couldn't cope with it at one point – or at some points, maybe quite a few points. I think it's probably better that it ended up the way it did because I've learned a lot since then, but I really feel there's still more there to be explored. But then I'm fairly easy about it. I mean there's maybe a little bit of hope that maybe something might come of it again. But other than that, I don't really feel that I've any regrets. I don't regret leaving my marriage for one minute. I mean I may get married again, I don't know, because I don't have any problems with the institution of marriage, especially nowadays that it's becoming more of an equal thing for both parties. I think it's really beautiful to have someone that you care about and that cares about you. So I believe in the basics. But I don't have any other regrets that I can think of.

Christine explains that while regretting the loss of her relationship with Jan, she has no regrets about having left her husband. In the following passage she again compares these two different experiences with regard to her own sexuality.

> I'm trying to think of how it has affected my life. I think it has somehow made me a little bit stronger because I was really able to get into a relationship where I wasn't able to do that before in my marriage. I was sort of relating but on a surface level, not particualrly intimately. I guess in my marriage and growing up I never really felt that I could express my sexuality fully. I was always waiting for the man to approach me, although I did get more assertive later on in my marriage and that felt a little bit better. But it always seemed that I was the one who was waiting for sexual overtures to be made to me, rather than if I felt like it, going out and getting what I wanted. With women it feels so much more open and equal and there is no fear of rejection or whatever. With my husband, it seemed like I had a stronger sexual drive than he did and he was busy and working and so on and I never really felt that my needs were being met. I was very frustrated with that. I didn't really know how to deal with it and I think that probably was one of the biggest problems that I had. I just didn't feel desired or didn't feel that I was needed. I did all the work I was supposed to do but I wasn't really having any fun. So I find that I'm just more relaxed with women and able to say what I need and how I feel. That's why I've pretty well chosen to go that route. Although from time to time I often feel that now it wouldn't make any difference if I met someone who I really could relate to and be intimate with, then it would probably be all right. I feel like I'm kind of on the fence in terms of my sexuality. It feels pretty positive with women, because I'm just more relaxed. When it comes to an intimate relationship I tend to be a little bit afraid – I don't know if it's insecure – with men, not really knowing exactly what it's about. I feel really comfortable with women. They seem to help me with my own self-image too because I see a lot of other women who are strong and I like being around them. This is really positive, but you could have that anywhere. It doesn't really have anything to do with the sexuality.

Christine states above that she is most comfortable with women and likes being around them. She makes clear that being a lesbian is for her not a political choice, but rather is a personal preference. She is also aware that being sexually compatible with a woman is not enough for her, that interests and priorities in common are also important.

> I don't know whether I should mention it. Being with a woman didn't have anything particularly political in it for me. I wasn't an avid feminist or anything like that at that point in time and I don't feel that I am now either. But I certainly do feel that I like that, I want that in my life and I am supportive of it. But on more of a personal level.
> I think women have their sexual problems together the same as men and women do. I'm not saying that there aren't any problems with women, because everyone's different. I did go with one woman and it turned out to be the same way it was in my marriage. She was just so busy with her work and all her things going on that she didn't have time to spend making love or being together as two people in a relationship. She was just off everywhere and that was very frustrating for me. The relationship ended because of that. We just weren't the same in our needs. So that sort of showed me that people are people and it doesn't really matter – this is just a recent thing – it doesn't really matter what your sexuality is, it's really personalities and whether you are matched, with the same desires. So it started with me thinking that, 'Well hey, this is kind of interesting. This is the same situation I left 10 years ago.' Maybe there's a little bit more to it than that whether it's a man or a woman. It's personality.

Being a lesbian and centering her life around women continues to be a positive experience for Christine today. That she can live her life openly with her children and with some of her co-workers adds to her positive experience of herself.

> And it still continues to be for the most part a very positive experience to be a lesbian and to have my life more or less centering around other women. I found that it has a positive effect on my family; it hasn't been derogatory in any way with my children. And I found that I can live my life pretty well normally and be fairly open about my sexuality. I don't find that it's anything that I have to hide except that I perhaps wouldn't talk about it in front of my children's friends and possibly with my clients at work, although some of them are other gay women and some of my purchasers are too. So I deal with both aspects in my work as well, which makes it much more comfortable for me. Some of the people in my office are aware of my sexuality and feel perfectly comfortable with it, which is really fortunate because if I was in a situation where I would have to hide that, I would probably be uncomfortable.

Christine, though presently 'unattached' has a desire to settle down with someone and still remain an independent individual. She describes what to her would be an ideal relationship – mutual sharing, support and acceptance.

> I think I have a strong desire to settle down and be with somebody that I can be happy with. That is always there for me. I really like that. But I don't really know how to find that for myself at times. I feel like I don't have the resources to do that, and to remain an individual and not get dependent; not to become too dependent upon someone else emotionally. That is my struggle. I suppose that's still continuing from my childhood. If I could be with someone and still be an individual, that would be ideal. Because if two people can be independent and do their own thing but still live together – complement each other and support each other – then that would just be the ideal relationship. It would be very satisfying. It would be a feeling of, maybe I could just relax and not have to worry about that anymore in my life. I could just say, 'Okay, now let's get on to other things; let's go and do what you really want to do.' And this is what I'm trying to do on my own now, just say, 'Okay, I'm here as an individual, I'm an independent person and let's get on with life.' I try not to worry too much about whether I'm with someone or not, because if I can maintain my own individuality, and if I find someone, well, it will be nice, but it's not going to matter that much. A relationship would mean having someone to care about, and somebody who cares about me; someone that I can give my love to and I won't be kicked in the face. That's what it means. Just a mutual support and sharing relationship where you can have your ups and downs and someone's not going to come down and judge you for it. They're going to accept who you are as an individual. I seem to find that more with women than I do with men, that I can share more of myself. But I don't think that it's impossible. I'm still wondering if I will ever meet a man who I can be myself with, So that's still an unknown.

The struggle between independence and dependence, experienced first by Christine in her childhood, continues on some level today. We see from her answer to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?" that Christine sees her need to be dependent and taken care of as weak. At the same time she recognizes that until she has somehow experienced the dependence she was never allowed as a child, the need will haunt her. In the meantime, she is learning to believe in herself, is struggling on and is gaining strength.

Well sometimes, I get a little, I don't know if defeated is the right word, but when I come up against a situation or a problem or something and it feels like a real struggle, I tend to want to back off. That's my first reaction. So I've really got to kick myself in the ass to get out there and do it. So I sort of don't like that; that holds me back. I've got to just be a little more positive towards myself and not be so hard on myself. For example, last week I had a few situations with my job that just didn't turn out. You know, I tried really hard but they just didn't work out and so I decided, 'Well, shit, I'm going to take a couple of days off, I'm exhausted.' Well, I wasn't exhausted but I didn't want to deal with that anymore. So I just took a couple of days off and I just said, 'I'm going to give myself a break from this.' And then I found that if I wanted to I could have gone on for a couple of more days. Like it would have been very easy just to let it go. So I had to really give myself a kick to get going and say, 'Well you get back at it and just do a little bit every day and don't push so hard and it'll all come together.' So I started getting back at it and then I was okay. But sometimes I think, 'Oh, I want someone to do this for me.' It's that thing of wanting to be dependent on someone that I've never really, I guess, allowed myself. I mean it was never there to begin with. There wasn't anybody to depend on the first 18 years of my life and then after I never was really able to because I thought I'd probably fall apart if I did become too dependent on someone. It's something I still have to go through, I think. It's maybe just letting myself become totally dependent, and maybe somehow going through it. I think that's probably still a desire I have way down deep inside. At least for a little while. I sort of think that sometimes if you go through something that you've always wanted to do all your life and you just go and do it, then it'll go away. Because that's happened for me in a lot of other experiences that I've had. So that's one that I've never really let myself have. So I think that one of these days, maybe that would be something for me to go and do. And then I'd get through it and probably be okay. I just would experience it and the need would have been satisfied. Does that make any sense? Right now it's a struggle for me. I don't know if it's so much that I dislike it, but it's something that I'm always confronting in myself and so it's part of the struggle. I just wish that maybe I could be a little bit stronger so that I wouldn't be struggling with that all the time – with wanting to let someone else make a decision for me once in a while. Because I like to make my own decisions. But sometimes it seems really hard to do that – like those are my weak moments when I would say, 'Oh, somebody else do it. I don't want to deal with this.' And then it goes away. But it feels weak to me. It feels like, 'Well, everybody else is out there having to deal with that, you've go to deal with it too.' Well I guess I compare it to a man in a way because men have to do that all the time because people are always coming to them and saying, 'Help! What do I do?' I see a guy out there with two little kids in a shopping centre and his wife towing him around and I think, "My God! What if he ever said, 'I don't want to do this anymore! Help me! I'm not strong enough to look after all of you anymore!'?" I think it takes a lot of guts to keep going. I sort of admire that. It's a quality that I admire in other people. I admire men for doing it because it must be such a struggle sometimes to do it. But they do it. I feel kind of sorry for them that they are presented with this by our society. I guess our society is based on the male figure being strong and – well, what would happen to the world if they all fell apart? Just like what would happen to the world if all the women fell apart? It's sort of gaining more strength and more of a belief in myself as a woman. I'm sure that the struggle will dissipate; that I am strong enough to go ahead and do it.

There's not too many things I dislike about myself, though I have a bit of a temper sometimes. I tend to think, 'Oh, oh, you should hang on to that a little bit better,' but it's not a big problem. I think I've pretty well got that one figured out. I can't think of anything else.

The struggles Christine is presently experiencing have to do with the basics: building her career, providing for her children and creating a stable family environment.

> But for now my life has got to go on and that's what I'm trying to do right now. To maintain a certain level of happiness, so to speak, by doing, getting my career going. It's a new career for me, and I'm working hard at that. And I'm trying to maintain a certain level of stability with my children, trying to maintain some stability for them. We have a house, the basics are all covered. But I'm still at a pretty basic level. There isn't too much room in my life for frills, like holidays and all the things that you do when you don't have to worry so much about the basic security. So I'm still in a pretty basic state right now. But I see that that will change. So I kind of have something to look forward to which is something that's new for me too. I have something to look forward to.

Building a career has not been easy for Christine. As she explains, there were no expectations on her as a child to achieve in school or to realize her potential.

> Back to when I was a kid though, it seems like nobody had any particular expectations of me and I didn't know what to expect of myself. Like nothing was ever expected of me. Well, physical work. But there weren't any demands on me to do well in school or to accomplish anything and I always felt as if I was floundering because I didn't know what I wanted and I didn't know what to do with my life, except grow up and get married. So it kind of seemed like it was a waste in a way. Like I've always sort of felt – well I wish I would have been better educated somehow, or at least someone had told me that there was a chance to have a better education or there was a chance maybe to do something, because I found out much later, like in 1973, that I am very intelligent. It never even dawned on me that I was. I never used it. I was so, I think, repressed somehow in my life that it never even dawned on me that I could go to university or I could be what I started to see all these other women being at that point. 'Hey, I could do that too. Hey! And in 1973!' So that was a big realization for me. I went to the university and I took all these tests to enter as a mature student because I thought, 'Oh, I'd really like to try that.' And I thought, 'I wonder if I could do it.' I didn't even know if I could do it. And I took all the tests and it showed I could definitely do it. I could do anything I wanted to do! And that really blew my mind!

That her lack of education and lack of preparation for the future is something that bothers her is evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?"

> I think I talked about that earlier and that was not getting a better education. That really pisses me off – that I didn't even think about taking a matric. Just thinking I wasn't smart enough to do it and not even considering doing it. It just blows me away how I didn't even think about that. And not going to university or taking some other training, because it's really hard to start out later on when you're older, right from scratch. So I think I really kind of resent not being better prepared for what my future was going to bring somehow. But then, you just have to let it go and say, 'Okay, you can start now.' There's not really too much else. Because I feel like everything I've done I've learned so much from, just going through the experience of it, that it's just preparing me better every day for the future, so to speak.

Christine believes that the result of not being expected to achieve as a child was that she didn't learn how to discipline herself. Consequently, as an adult she felt overwhelmed when she took some university courses. Understanding the connection between motivation and achievement, she realizes that in spite of not being motivated as a child,

she now is becoming motivated to build her career. This she enjoys. Being in charge of her life and making her own decisions makes her feel worthwhile.

> I don't know if it was because I was a woman but it seemed like I was not very well disciplined. I never had to be particularly, except to get up and go to school. There was no expectations. To accomplish something you have to be disciplined, you have to apply yourself and I didn't know how to do that other than to just look after my family and do my housework and that sort of thing. That took a certain amount of discipline but I didn't have to be really disciplined until I started to go to university. It was just overwhelming how I had to discipline myself to do all this. It was hard! I had never really done anything that was hard. So that really kind of blew me away to realize that. And that's something that I'm always working on, is my self-discipline. Now it makes the struggle a little bit more I think because it isn't in me; it's something I have to be conscious of all the time. But then the other thing is that I had never really done anything that I wanted to do. I had never been motivated to learn before. I was never a very motivated kind of a child because there was no need. Now I'm learning that, and it feels much better to have something like my career now. I'm really into it! I'm really enjoying it! So my life feels much more worthwhile. Now I'm doing something that I like. I'm not just working at a job because I have to work. Like now it's my own independence and my own individuality and what I want to do with my life that's important and makes my life much more worthwhile. I wouldn't be able to live any other way, if I couldn't make my decisions. If someone else started making my decisions for me I just couldn't go along with that. I have to be able to do that for myself now. That feels really, really important. It means I'm a worthwhile person. It's really important to me to be on my own, to have my own life and to organize that for myself. Now that I'm a single mother, well I do that all the time. I have total control over that. And I like it that way! I can't always cope with it, I mean who can? But basically, it means a lot to me.

Christine speaks specifically of the challenge of being a single mother and tells how her experience living in the country inspired in her a positive attitude toward coping.

> Being a single mother is a challenge. It's exhilarating in a lot of ways. Like the challenge to keep your life steady and stable for your children despite your ups and downs. To just keep going forward and saying, 'Okay, that'll take care of itself,' or 'We'll work out how to solve that particualr problem. Maybe we can't do it right now but we'll work on it and see if we can.' I can keep things running smoothly so they feel a sense of security being with me and that I'm always going to be there. I feel like that's really important to children, to know that someone's going to be there for them if they have a problem. And I guess it's important to me because there was never anyone there for me, when I was a child. So I see that as being the number one thing. It's a challenge to make all this happen, despite my ups and downs. So that really gets me out there to solve my own problems faster and better, and not to maybe worry so much about things in the future. To kind of have a basic faith that things will probably turn out all right. That's what living in the country did for me anyway. It kind of gave me a faith in human nature and in mankind that things were going to continue, the world was not going to end tomorrow. I just learned that from being in touch with nature and seeing how it rejuvenates itself. We can do the same thing for ourselves. That's just a basic thing I brought with me from that. It's really, really helped me now that I'm back in the city and coping with all the things that hit you living here and having a job and so on.

In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" she replies that she values

kids, having learned on the commune to see things from their point of view.

> And I value kids too. I look at kids totally different that I did seven or eight years ago. I mean it just blows me away, the difference. I thought kids had to be seen and not heard, they didn't have opinions and thoughts. And that's not true. Now I really get off on seeing them being in their own little space. They can teach you an awful lot and they have really interesting things to say. It's a different way of looking at life. You can imagine what everything else would be like if you were this big or if everything was so tall and you were looking up looking at things all the time.

Christine admits that some days she does not feel like coping, and that this feeling is cyclical. At these times she feels she needs more sleep, has to discipline herself to keep going, and sometimes has to take a break from work.

> But I don't always feel like getting up in the morning and going to work. I don't always feel as ambitious as I might like. Or I find that the drive that you feel sometimes is just not there. You wake up some days and there's just nothing happening. 'Oh wow! What am I going to do? I sure don't feel like doing this and this today.' That seems to be a thing that goes in cycles for me. It's certainly not there all the time but every once in a while I have a period of a few days where I just don't have the energy that I would normally have. I feel like I need more sleep. I get really sleepy and I feel slightly confused. I really have to discipline myself to set my goals for the day and say, 'Yes, okay, there's this and this and this to accomplish.' Really to direct myself, rather than just letting it all go. And sometimes I just have to let it all go and take two days off.

The cyclical changes in feelings and energy level that Christine now experiences used to be more severe before she had a hysterectomy. She explains that although the physical discomfort she experienced during menstruation was eliminated immediately after the surgery, it took her about a year to recooperate from the hysterectomy itself, and to adjust to its physiological effects.

> It isn't so bad for me now because I had a hysterectomy. I had one when I was 26 and that really upset my whole equilibrium. It took about a year to get all the hormones and things back to where they should normally be functioning. It took quite a while to adjust to the change in hormones and of course it took time to recover from the operation, the physical drain of that. But now I find that I don't have the physical discomfort that most women have – women who menstruate – and that helps tremendously. It really, really helps that you don't have to cope with that. So all you have to deal with is what you're feeling in your emotions. Because it feels emotional although I think its physiological basically. So even though I've had a hysterectomy, I still have a cyclical, hormonal change which effects how I feel. Sometimes it just feels like I can't cope with that particular situation right at that point in time, so I just have to say, 'Okay, I can't deal with it right now, we'll put it off and deal with it later,' and only deal with the emergencies that come up – the everyday kind of things. And I find that this usually passes after three or four days and I sort of get back on my normal track again.

Christine describes the problems she experienced with her bladder and kidneys which occured during and after her pregnancies. Her doctor's judgment that she should not have more children because of the strain on her kidneys, and her own experience that

her infections appeared with menstruation, convinced her that a hysterectomy was her best option.

> When I had my first child I was ill with a kidney infection twice in the pregnancy and I was ill in between my children with it as well. When I had my second child, I got ill with it several more times. Then when my second child was born I was diagnosed to have chronic cystitis, which is an inflammation of the bladder, and I was in pretty bad shape. We moved to Kamloops and I continued to have trouble with kidney infections, pretty continually for the next eight months or so. So I went to the doctor, I went all the time, but after a while it was getting pretty upsetting because I was continually ill. And it's a very serious condition when your kidneys are involved. So he suggested to me that I should not have any more children. He felt that having children was just too much strain on my kidneys. I'd had a lot of tests done and x-rays showed damage to my kidneys, ureter and bladder. So he suggested that I could have my tubes tied or I could have a hysterectomy. And it was my experience that when I menstruated this infection would come upon me, you see, and he felt there could be some contamination involved there but he wasn't really sure. So we discussed the pros and cons and he thought it would be probably better to do a hysterectomy considering I had had so much trouble. I said, 'Yes, I agree, I think that would be just fine.' I couldn't have any more children anyway. I mean that was totally out, because of the danger. My kidneys just couldn't handle it.

The surgery was traumatic. Christine did not recooperate for a long time and in the end needed additional surgery. Finally, after years of problems with her health, she began to recover.

> So he did the operation but it didn't turn out very well for me because after the operation my blood didn't make itself back up again, so I got very, very ill. About a week after the operation I was on blood transfusions and in a very weakened condition. I was in the hospital for six weeks after that, just getting myself healthy again so I could get up and walk around. That was a pretty traumatic kind of experience. After six weeks I went home to my family again but the next year I continued to have problems with my bladder and I had to have another operation to put it back in place and my vagina as well, because having children destroyed that as well. So I got that all fixed up and then I started back on the road to health. I started to feel a lot better and continued to feel better. Now I am very, very healthy but I had a lot of years of not being that way.

All in all, Christine feels the operations have been a positive factor because she no longer experiences health problems. Although the cyclical, hormonal changes still effect her, she feels she can cope with them.

> The operations turned out to be a really, really positive thing for me because I just don't have any trouble anymore. My kidneys are fine now, my bladder is not perfect but it's pretty good and I don't get kidney infections anymore. I don't get sick anymore. I am very rarely ever ill. I hardly ever get colds anymore, so I think that I'm really happy that I decided to do that. It was a very positive thing for me because being ill is not a very good space for your head. So in a way I don't have to cope with all those women's problems anymore and it kind of freed me up a lot. I'm not held down at all by that anymore. Other than like I was saying before, the kind of cyclical things that come on you which seem to have something to do with the hormonal change in the body from month to month. I know what's happening and I can cope with it and it feels fine. I think, 'Okay, well, give yourself a couple of days to

> just lay low, and it'll be all right.' I don't expect myself to be a Superwoman anymore. Ever! Superwoman is out!

In spite of her struggles – both past and present – as a woman, Christine is glad she is a woman. She feels that women in our society are allowed to be more human – to express warmth, caring and softness – than are men. She feels positive about being a mother in this sense, adding that caring for children teaches us to be less self-centered.

> Now I feel really glad that I am a woman because somehow I think a woman has more of an opportunity in this society to be more human or more feeling or more – well, you can be weak once in a while. You're allowed that. I feel sorry for men because they don't have that. It must be a tremendous struggle to them to have to be strong all of the time. Of course, I also see it as strength to allow myself to have my weak moments, and to not be able to cope with everything all the time. And I feel like men have to and that must be really difficult for them. I don't envy them that position. Being a single mother, I don't think I'm allowed to be as weak, or I don't know if weak's the right word. But I have to be stronger more often, or I have to keep in control of things. But that's a challenge too; that's a kind of a positive thing. It kind of keeps you going. I don't know, being a woman you're allowed to express warmth and caring and softness and you can maybe show your love a little bit more for other people and for your children, and you don't have to be quite so hard on yourself somehow. You can enjoy some of the more beautiful parts of life easier than I think men can. Or you can allow that to happen more easily. It feels good when I allow that to happen. I enjoy being a mother; I like feeling motherly. That feels really good for me to be able to express that part of me; that feels very positive. I'm really glad that I have children because I think that's shown me a part of life that is a beautiful part of life. It gets you out of your selfishness; it gets you thinking about other people – that there are other people in this world and perhaps you can help them a little bit too. That sort of thing.

The kind of human caring that Christine feels she is allowed to experience as a woman is clearly something she values. She explains what this means to her in answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> I value my relationships with my children and with other people very much. It feels important to be a good friend to people and to be able to give something back to society. Because I find that basically everybody is really good to me. I find that the people that I meet in the world are pretty decent sorts of people. To be able to give that back in some way, even it it's stopping to help somebody and give them a boost on their car or taking an old lady home the other day because she needed a ride. She was cold! Helping your kids with a certain thing or a friend who needs someone to talk to – all those kinds of things, those are really, really important to me. To be able to give something back, something that I value. And having the freedom to do that. I somehow feel like I have more to offer now. And that makes me feel really worthwhile. 'Hey, you have something to offer.' Just little things like at the office we had duty days and to be there and to put your share into taking all the code calls and relaying messages for people. It's a bit of a pain, you know. I suppose it could be considered that, but if you can do a really good job of that, then other people do the same thing for you and everybody holds up their end. So you're all kind of helping each other. And that feels really good – to be a part of an organization, part of a family. You're holding up your end of the bag, the kids are doing their thing to hold up their end. In a friendship it's the same thing. Each person is putting into

> the relationship, not just taking. And with the things that I've learned along the way in the past 10 years or so, I feel like I have more resources. Like I have quite a bit to offer to others, you know, even if it's just little things like helping somebody fix something. I've had a lot of experience with doing manual things, mechanical kinds of skills and skills with my hands. Like I was saying about the plumbing and fixing up houses and the renovations and things. I always have people coming to me asking me: 'How do you do this?' 'What should I do in this situation?' I can help them in those little ways and that makes me feel really good. I love to spread the knowledge around. Especially to other women who want to know about those sorts of things but have always thought that they couldn't do it. And you just get out there and you do it and you show them that it doesn't matter whether you're a man or a woman, you're a person and you can do whatever you put your mind to doing. And do it well. It's not just cooking and baking and cleaning.

As stated in the introduction, the career that Christine is currently struggling to build is in real estate. She describes how she experiences a sense of equality on the job, the positive feeling of working with and selling houses to women especially, and the importance to her of having strong, successful women as models.

> I'm in real estate right now. And it's great! It's equal! I have a woman manager, I have a woman assistant manager, I work with 25 other women and three men. And the women are the top producers, they're just top, top, top, all the time. The guys are just scrambling to keep up. The people I work with are very strong individuals. They're mostly older married women but have chosen a career for themselves and are being very successful. There's one other woman who has children besides myself, we're the two single parents. There's a couple of single women but most of the others are married and all the men are married. But they're all individuals. They come from all different walks of life. There are teachers and nurses and whatever. It has just sort of made me realize that being a woman is no problem. It doesn't hold you back at all. There's just no room for that because it's so much up to the individual. Individuals can achieve whatever they want. It doesn't matter what your sex is, it's a matter of how hard you want to work. It's really positive! The women are doing really well and are very professional; just top notch individuals. In real estate across Canada, 60 percent of the people who are in it are women. And three out of four of the top realtors in Canada are women, which is really neat. And a lot of times they are older women who have gone back to work after they've raised their children. They know how to sell houses, and a lot of other things. Like in commercial we have ten men and one woman and she's tops all the time. She's just a top notch person. She earns more money than anybody else in the whole company except for the boss who's a man. So there's good examples in my work for me to fall on. I feel that's important because it kind of shows me, 'Well look, if you really want to, this is what you can do'. It shows me that there's room for improvement, within my own self, and there's always someone there to give you a hand if you need it. Because I'm just starting. Well, you're always starting in real estate because every deal is different; every transaction has its own kind of particular situations that come up. You're dealing with something different all the time, because you're dealing with emotions; you're dealing with people.
>
> I find that I have been selling real estate to a lot of women lately which is quite interesting for me. I have clients who are kind of in the same boat I am; they're single women out looking for properites, a place to invest their money, homes for their families. So it's been very rewarding for me in both aspects. In real estate you're dealing with the women a lot because they're the ones who choose the houses. Like the man doesn't have to live there, he doesn't have to take care of it, he doesn't have to clean it. He might want the yard to be a certain way or maybe wants a garage or a basement to be such and such, but basically it's the woman who makes the decision, to my

> way of thinking. A lot of men just send me out with their wives and say, 'You guys find a house and then when you find the one you think you like I'll come and have a look at it'. I've run into that a couple of times. So I think, 'Well, that's pretty good!' You know years ago that wouldn't have happened. The man would just have pointed at the house and said, 'That's the one we're buying.' But it isn't that way anymore. Women are standing up for themselves a lot more. I think women on the whole are starting to perk up and say, 'Hey! I have some say in this, in my life!' And I see that happening a lot. One of my clients is a woman who's active in the Edmonton Women's Movement. She's really a tiger, I'll tell you. It was quite an experience working with her. She knew what she wanted. And I see women out there making financial decisions. Like my boss is incredible; she handles that thing just like gravy. I think it's nice to have examples like that around too. I mean it's a hectic business just like a lot of businesses. It's pretty pressured. But when I get down and think 'Oh, I've made some mistakes' or 'I'm not doing this right' or whatever, I say to myself 'Look, you just keep going because those other guys have made it and they went through exactly the same thing you're going through. So you just keep sticking with it everyday. Do it a little bit every day rather than wishing you were there now.' It's just kind of like I can see that their success has not been without struggle for each one as an individual. They're coping with it every day; so can I.

Having women friends who are also involved in careers and are becoming successful is important to Christine.

> There are lots of examples from within the group of friends that I have that show me that women are out there putting in their two-bits worth every day and they're in high positions or they have good educations or they're very creative and they're just handling themselves beautifully. And it doesn't have anything to do with having a man behind them or anything like that. A lot of them are single. Some of them are married but very much an individual on their own; they'd be doing it if they weren't married. So I really see women just rolling along on their own a lot more than when I started out 10 years ago.

In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" Christine explains that she values her friends because she can share her problems, struggles, and achievements with them, because their accomplishments inspire her and because she appreciates the feeling of having goals in common.

> My friends are very valuable to me. They're someone that I can talk to about the problems and struggles that I'm having and someone I can share my achievements with and my happiness, or someone who appreciates the challenge that you're taking, who says, 'Hey, far out!' You can talk about business or you can talk about your goals and there's other women who have the same kinds of goals for their lives. And there's different fields, there's women who are in very creative fields and they want to achieve a certain standard for themselves, professionalism or whatever, and become a really good artist, not just someone drawing for a hobby. I have one friend who is a reporter for a radio station. She reads the news and she's finally hit the big time. She's on daytime radio, maximum exposure, and that was one of her goals, that she could be a woman out there reporting the important events of the day, that it wasn't just men who were doing it. And she could do it just as well. I have another friend who's an architect and she just finished her Masters and she's really doing well as an architect. She's accomplishing her goals. It's just very inspiring to be with people like that, just to see that all around you. When the going gets tough you think, 'Well, there are other people out there doing the same thing,' so you kind of feel like you have something in common with someone. You don't feel so isolated. It feels

good; it feels really good.

Talking about her friends, Christine realized that she no longer has many friends who are single parents, and recognizes that as a loss.

> I don't know a lot of single parents. Most of my friends seems to be either married without children, or married with children or without, or just single women. I don't know a lot of single parents, so I kind of miss that. I would maybe like to get to know more single mothers, so I could talk more. Like Jan filled that for me. That really was neat for us that we could have the same kinds of problems with our children, and we had someone to talk it over with. She always had a fresh insight for me and I had one for her. That was really great, and I sort of miss that.

Balancing her appreciation of friends, Christine also values her time alone. She describes what being alone means to her.

> And I really value my time to be alone, a chance to sort of sort things out, to tap my space, to just think if I feel like it. That's really important to me, and I spend quite a bit of time by myself and I quite like that. I can get myself organized and get on with it. It gives me time to organize my life and make decisions about what I want to do.

Most of all, however, Christine values the right to make her own decisions – to be in control of her own life. This means to her that she is worthwhile. She contrasts the present with the periods in her childhood and marriage in which she had no control and felt helpless.

> I guess the right to make my own decisions keeps coming up as number one. And I think I could have that whether I was single or in a relationship or whatever. That feels pretty good. I don't know if control is the right word but it means to me that I am in control of my life; I'm not waiting around for somebody else to do it for me or to make a move, to find out which direction my life is going to go. It's up to me to make those moves. I think that as long as you go on and you seem to be making mostly the right kinds of decisions, then life goes along pretty well and you feel pretty good and you think, 'Okay, this is good!' You just feel worthwhile that you're doing the right thing for yourself. You're looking after yourself and you're taking good care of yourself and your needs and those of your children. So I guess for me to be able to cope with what life throws at me and to come out of it and say, 'Well, I think I've got that looked after' – that makes me feel worthwhile when I can cope with things. Enough so that I'm not worrying about things all the time and I can go out and have fun and I can say just bascially, 'This is okay and I'm satisfied with my life.' When somebody else was making decisions for me I felt helpless, like I didn't have anything to say about it. My opinion wasn't asked for, things just happened to me, like sitting in the back of the room and just watching everything going on around you, and not being a part of it. I felt that in my marriage, and even as a child. Because everything was happening in my family life, and I didn't have any control over what was happening. Now I'm out there in the action, so it just makes me feel more like I am part of the society and that I'm part of what's going on in the world.

Another aspect of being a woman today that Christine finds positive, is being involved in the Women's Movement. It has given her a feeling of being active in and belonging to society, and a chance to learn she was capable of work defined as typically

male.

> Being involved with the Women's Movement and now with women who are into careers of their own makes me feel really glad, because they're so strong and to be part of that strength and to feel that strength within yourself and know that you're out there doing the same thing, that's great. It's pretty, pretty positive to see what women are offering in our society. They're really giving a lot. And I don't think they've been appreciated before – they're just starting to be appreciated for what they have, for the strengths they do have. It's not a man's world out there. It's a people's world and it's really exciting to feel part of it. That's what the Women's Movement is doing – giving me a feeling of belonging to our society and seeing society is changing and the changes are positive. I feel myself becoming stronger and more able to cope with the situations that are thrown at me – situations that I couldn't have coped with 10 years ago. Like going out and finding a career that I'm really happy in. In the past three years or so I was into woodworking, which was a whole new ball game for me to discover something different or something new in myself. I really enjoyed the years that I was involved in that and doing work that was typically men's work and finding out that I was intelligent enough to do it. I also had the physical capabilities to do it and the skills with my hands to create beautiful things. That really, really made me feel good about myself. I did that when I was living in the country. Someday I'd like to go back to living in the country and living communally.

Being a part of the Women's Movement gives Christine strength to carry on in her own life. Appreciating that other women are in the same situation as herself, and knowing she can be both supported and supporting, is a positive experience for her.

> There are always women out there doing something and I feel, 'Hey! Wow! I like that!' I like to see those sorts of things happening and it kind of gives you a strength to carry on in your own little life and make your own dent. I can be an example too, to other women, just by being me. I don't have to do anything specific particularly, but it's just that I'm carrying on my life in a relatively positive way. The Women's Movement gives me encouragement to keep doing that, to keep going on, with how I feel about my life, how I feel about living my life as an independent person. And not to get discouraged about being a single parent because God, there's so many of them out there, men and women. It just gives you a kind of faith that you're not the only one. You have others to share things with. And I have a lot of support to give to others. So that's basically what it means to me.

Feeling capable both at work and as a parent, being in control of her life, and being respected for her knowledge gives Christine a sense of power or self-worth. She also experiences a sense of power and strength when involved with Women's Movement activities, as seen from her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerful?"

> Well, by being able to do pretty well anything I put my mind to. And that's in pretty well any area. I can work out problems on my own and with other people. I guess I feel a sense of power – self-worth I guess – when I'm doing the job of a parent fairly well, and again with my job. When I do my job well I feel that gives me a sense of power – that I have control over what's happening, I understand what's happening. I suppose I feel a sense of having a certain amount of personal power when people look up to me and when they come to me for assistance. When I'm involved with things with the Women's Movement I feel a sense of power of women who make their

> minds up to do certain things – they can really get out and organize it and do a pretty good job. That's gives me a nice strong feeling of strength to be part of that, to see that happening around me. But I don't think about power too much. It's, I don't know, self–worth maybe; it's more of a self–worth than power somehow.

That Christine has developed a strong sense of self–worth is validated by her answers to the question , "What do you value about yourself?" She speaks firstly about being 'gutsy', which means being not afraid to try something new and strong enough to cope with whatever life offers.

> Well, I guess the first thing that comes to my mind is that I'm not afraid to try something new. I'm kind of gutsy in my own little way. I'm willing to tackle anything and I feel that that's a really good quality to have. I don't know a lot about a lot of things, but I'm sure willing to learn. I experiment and give it a try. Because what I've found is that you can pretty well do anything you want. If you really put your mind to it, if you're willing to work hard enough to get it. That's sort of the first thing. To me it means that, well, that I'm strong. I can feel my own strength. I know I have still a lot of sadness and I have this and that, but I think I really have been through a lot and it has given me a lot of strength or faith in myself. When things are rough I know that tomorrow is a new day and this will pass. What ever negative thing you might be going through, it isn't forever. I mean hell, if I've been through that, I can do anything, within reason. And getting along in life in an ordinary sort of way that people get along. I mean I don't have the desire to go out and climb mountains particuarly, but I love to go hiking. I'm not driven to achieve fantastic things but when I do achieve something pretty neat I feel really good.

Christine also values her own uniqueness and the fact that after all that she has been through she is still able to care about others. She believes that she tries to understand rather than judge people, and she sees this as a strength of women, perceiving that in our society men generally have more difficulty understanding others without judging them.

> I sort of see myself as being somewhat unusual. I think the experiences in my life have not made me a very ordinary kind of woman, or maybe I'm just unique in my own way. I appreciate my own uniqueness and what I've gained from being the way that I am. I like myself pretty much. I feel like I've gone through life and I'm still able to feel love for other people – men and women and children. I care about other people – what happens. I feel like I'm pretty easy to get along with, just in my everyday life. Maybe I try a little bit too hard to please other people sometimes. I try and see somebody else's point of view. I try and have empathy for where other people are at, and try and understand, really understand, what is motivating tham to act in a certain way. Not to judge and say, 'Okay, he's this way.' I try and get underneath that. So I think that that's something that I like about myself. It frees you up somehow. You're not caught up in judging other people. It's not harsh; it's soft, it's warm. To me, that's a very unique thing about being a woman, somehow, to be able to have that for human beings and for other people. It seems like I think that's a real strength of women. That they are able to do that and as I said before, it's probably more difficult for men to do that. That's a really beautiful thing.

Further, Christine values her positive energy which she feels other people pick up on.

She perceives herself as a responsible mother and believes that her acceptance of others is a strength. That she is able to look after herself and her responsibilities makes her feel worthwhile.

> Let me think. What else do I like about myself? Well, basically I've got a lot of energy and it's pretty positive. I like that about myself. I feel like it makes other people feel really good to be around me most of the time. It's like I have something to offer. I have good energy and other people pick up on it and we feel good together. That type of thing. I guess I like the fact that I am responsible to a certain extent. I'd rather be that way than be the other because life would be too chaotic. I feel like I'm basically a pretty good mother because I do try to understand what's happening with my children and try to pass along some little bit about taking responsibilities for themselves and so on. I don't have a lot of expectations of other people. I try to accept them pretty well for what they are, and I find that to be a good thing. Because otherwise it just seems senseless to expect – once you start doing that it never seems to come together. I guess it sort of gets back to strength again. I don't know if that's the right word. Feeling good that I have those things to offer; that I'm a person and that just by being there and being what I am is a positive thing for others, as well as for myself. It's kind of a circle. But I don't find that I'm draining on other people. I am able to look after my own life and take care of my own responsibilities and things that I have to take care of. It makes me feel worthwhile.

Finally, Christine appreciates her sense of humor and her way of looking at the world. She explains that she values in people not what they do, but the fact that they enjoy what they do, and that this is what she likes about herself.

> I have a good sense of humour I think, and kind of a neat way of looking at things. We were talking the other day, kind of like, I don't know if it's philosophical or what it is, but just sort of the way you live your life that makes you feel happy. And to me it doesn't really matter what you're doing as long as you're into it. Like you could be happy being a ditch digger or you could be happy being the King of Spain, but it's not being anything in particular, it's being into whatever it is you do and enjoying the people that you meet each day in you life. Like I'm meeting a whole new circle of people now that I'm into this new job, totally different again than those I spent the last seven years with. And I'm really getting off on it. I'm getting off on enjoying the city. I go to my little gas station every once in a while and I'm enjoying getting to know the people there, sort of seeing what makes them tick. The people at the bank, the lady at the hardware store next door – how her life a little bit interrelates with mine. Where you go to have lunch everyday, the maitre 'd; going to different places and meeting these people doing their life's work for whatever time they're doing it, and just seeing how neat they are. 'Like wow, here's this guy doing this and he really likes it!' And it's really good! Finding out why they are doing what they are doing; just kind of taking an interest in the people who you're involved with every day even though you don't have that much in common with them, or might never see them other than that. It just kind of adds a little bit of spark to life to know that there can be these nice little moments during your day with others. That's sort of what I'm like; I really like people, finding out about them, sharing a little something with them. I think that's about it.

G. Mary

Mary is a 35 year old woman, born in the United States of Hispanic origin, who has lived in Edmonton for the past 11 years. Her mother has three years of university education and is a teacher. Her father has a high school and business school education and is a retired bureaucrat. In her family Mary was the eldest of four children. She married at age 24, was divorced at age 30 and remarried at age 31. She has two children ages two and three from her second marriage. Mary has two university degrees and has worked as a teacher, a librarian and a writer. At present she is a homemaker, a free-lance writer, a music student and a member of the Board of Directors for her childrens' nursery school. She makes $2,000 per year from her free-lance work and shares the finances of her husband who is a civil servant and makes $28,000 a year.

Asked, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" Mary's first response related to having a family, a responsibility which at the moment she finds frustrating.

> I think the first thing that comes to mind is the family - children - and so that answer has only come to me lately. Before that it was tied up, I think, still with the family. Biologically tied to being a wife and a mother but I never had a family until my second marriage. It's frustrating to be a woman because you have to put off so much of yourself because of children and because of your responsibilities.

The nature of Mary's frustration becomes clear as she describes her situation. She has been trying to be a full-time mother to two small children and at the same time realize her own potential through her career. With too much to do and not enough sleep she has had difficulty coping with all the demands she experiences. Only recently has she begun to realize that her difficulty is not a reflection of her own failure.

> Virginia and I were talking the other day about how being a female affects your life and I realized that it just affects everything about you. You cannot be, it's just really hard to be a realized person and be a woman at the same time, unless you give up some aspects of being a woman - like not having children. But then that doesn't make you a realized person because 50 percent of you is the fact that you bear children; that's what your body is supposed to do. I read about Georgia O'Keefe. She decided not to have kids because she knew that if she did she wouldn't paint. I bet you that most of the women that have done anything, have done it because of the great sacrifice on the part of their family or they have just not married or they have broken marriages and children who have grown up without them, more or less. I just think it's really hard and something has to suffer; something has to give. I don't believe that I am such an oddball that because I don't have the energy and I don't have the time, I can't do it. I'm more organized than half the women I know, and I do a lot, and I'm working from the time I get up in the morning to the time I go to bed at night. I very rarely ever sit down and watch TV or read a book. And that also makes me very cross and miserable. There's no time left for anything else. I think I've just lately begun to realize that it's not because I am a failure. I would say just six months ago I was

> trying to be a success and do everything right. I think that's why I kept on editing with one hand while I was nursing Sara with the other. Because I wanted to do it all right and I wanted to keep up. And I think I just have to accept that I can't do it. I don't want to do it. My kids are too close together. If they were apart, further apart like yours, it's a little easier because one of them is at school all day long. You just have one to worry about all the time. Sometimes I think I wish I had never had children, but that's only in a very bleak, bleak moment, because they are really precious to me. I really want to do right for them, even if that means working or not working. I like to think of it as a deferral though, not a sacrifice, or not like the martydom of my parents. I don't think of myself as being old or middle-aged yet. I'm only 35 and grew up so late; that's maybe why I don't feel old. I'm beginning to look old to myself though. I catch myself in the mirror and I can't quite get myself looking good - it takes a little more effort. It takes sleep - lots of sleep, and I don't get much of that.

That Mary is truly frustrated by her circumstances is validated in her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?"

> I have a lot of resentments and I don't know what they come from. I get into a state where I resent the phone, I resent the mailman, I resent Ralph not doing this or doing that and I resent the kids doing this or doing this. I mean I'm just full of it I think, but I don't know exactly where it comes from. I think that's what makes me so cross most-of the time, is that I do things with resentment. I guess I thought it was possible at some point to do everything, to do the child-rearing and the housewife and my own thing. I must have thought it was possible at one point and I soon discovered that it wasn't possible, and I think I've been dealing with that one for a long time. Having Sara so close on the tail of Teddy was a totally devastating event. It wasn't resentment at Ralph, it was more against myself. That pregnancy I caused out of carelessness. I was just beginning to feel 'myself' again when I got pregnant with her. It was just overwhelming! I was stunned, just so horribly depressed! I didn't know who to talk to about it or what to say to anybody, and people could probably tell I felt like shit. But the thing that I really don't want to do is to gripe a lot. Sometimes that doesn't do any good, but you sort of have to just pull up your socks and just get through it. That's the only way you're going to get through a lot of experiences. And once Sara was born, she was an awfully good baby, and she's still pretty good, and I really love her now. But I guess, I don't know what the resentments are, just caught by biology I guess. Just caught! Here you are, you're in the pits for awhile. I'm not being a perfect mother, though I say I'm going to do it for awhile. I don't like being home with small kids everyday. I like to think, to plan ahead what to do to get us out, to keep from being bored stiff. God forbid that one of them should be sick this week with Ralph gone and the car broken down and the garage fire and all. There was a time last year when I used to smoke dope every night before Ralph came home at supper, just to get through the next two or three hours of the evening- the dinner time, the bath time, the bed time. I just couldn't cope with it. That was the end of the line for me. Then I found stresstabs. But it's really a bind, there's no doubt about it.

Above Mary comments that being caught by biology is part of what it means to her to be a woman. She associates becoming a woman with her first menstruation. Unprepared for it, she was upset, ashamed and repelled by the experience. Further, being a quiet and withdrawn child, she found it a shattering experience.

> Going back to being a woman though, I think the first thing that flashed into my mind when you said that was when I first started menstruating. That was a very, very painful experience, mentally and emotionally, because I was not at all prepared for it. I hadn't any idea that this would happen to me. My mother had not talked to us – she did the same thing with my sister too – had not talked to us at all about it. And so one fine Sunday morning, there I was. Bleeding! And I was so upset! Mostly my feelings were that of shame, because I thought I had done something to myself that would cause this to happen. I was ashamed and I didn't know what to do. I couldn't really bring myself to tell my mother about it. So I spent the day trying to cover up the evidence. I wouldn't go to Sunday school and I wouldn't go to church and that was a big, big deal in my family. And I couldn't think of a good excuse. I don't know if my mother ever really figured out what was happening that day, but I remember that was the first time. I started in the fifth grade which was pretty young. I was 11; maybe that's why she hadn't said anything. But my first feelings of that were just it was a real uptight thing. It was some awful fuss that day because I dirtied my blanket or the bed, and so I had to struggle with a way of cleaning it that would not be obvious to anybody in the family. So I think what I did, yeah, what I did was I faked spilling coffee on the bed and that's how I got around cleaning this stain that I made on the bed. My mother didn't know a thing about it. And I think probably what happened was that when she came home from church and saw this she just gave me a sanitary napkin, which I was just repelled by. I always have been repelled by those things. My sister is two years younger and I talked to her about it, because we've tried to figure why the hell my mother, who went to college, who knew a few things about life, would have been so short-sighted about something like that. We've even asked her and I don't think she quite recalls it as being that traumatic. But she doesn't offer an excuse. Patricia was a little bit more together. I guess maybe I must have said something to her, because by the time it happened to her she was even talking about it to her brother, who's her twin. So she must have been a lot more psychologically prepared for it, and took it much more for granted than I did. I was a very quiet, withdrawn child. All my life I've always been withdrawn, so for something like that to happen was a very shattering experience. I can remember it very clearly. The whole day.

Mary's uncomfortable feelings about menstruation have persisted. Today she is concerned about her own discomfort affecting her daughter's attitudes and feelings about her body.

> And the feeling continued in a way, because I was always worried when I was having my period that something would show at the back of my skirt. And in fact I remember once in junior high school I had a leak. I think most women have those awful experiences where you kind of have to walk out of the class backwards. Fortunately, I was wearing a black straight shirt. I went home and changed. But there was always a slight tinge of fear that it would be discovered by anybody: female, male, mother, dad, children, brother, sister. I just always felt that it was something that should be secret. My feelings today are a little more relaxed. I can talk about it to my friends and to Ralph, if he's interested hearing about it. But it's taken me a long time to get over that. I'm not quite to the point where I can leave my box of tampons on the back of the toilet. If somebody came they'd know I was having my period, I guess that's why. How can I do that to Sara? She's such a free little ball of energy. She was sitting on her changing table today and she was looking at her genitals. I guess she found her clitoris today. That was the biggest, biggest thrill – she was sitting there and parting her labia and she said, 'Teddy, look!' And Teddy went right over there. He said, 'I want one of them.' He said, 'How come I can't open my' – we call his penis a peepil which is the Spanish word for it, that I find more comfortable – 'How come I can't open my peepil like that?' He thought that was really wonderful that she could spread it around. I think if she can keep that going for the rest of her life,

she'll have made a huge accomplishment.

Mary perceives herself as self-conscious and passive, and as lacking in confidence. This attitude affected her performance at college because she never dared to think for herself, and always assumed others had more to offer.

> I'm a self-conscious person. It's hard to say whether menstruating made me self-consious or the fact that I was self-conscious caused me to behave that way towards that event. Whatever, my being self-conscious has certainly made me a very passive person. The shrink that I was seeing before, just after George and I split up, her big thing was to try to get me to see that I was a passive person and that I should not be, because I was letting my life be events that just happened, that I was not planning. I was not controlling my life and my future. And it was very, very true. I really believe now that I've done that almost all my life. And part of it is a lack of confidence in my opinion, in my ability to understand, in my intellect. Like intellectually I can see that if I had had a bit different attitude toward myself I would have gone farther. I went to a very good liberal arts college, which probably did me almost as much good as being born. That place was 2000 miles from home for one thing, and had very good teachers. But I was not ready for it because I didn't have the ability to see myself as Mary, whose opinions on a subject were worthwhile. I never opened my mouth in classes. Never! Unless I was called on. And I always took copious notes; everything the professor said I wrote down verbatim, practically. I never had the confidence to just sit and listen and think and distill. I was a very meticulous, sort of plodding student. Consequently, I made very average grades. I just never went above an average grade point in school because I never went that step beyond.
> Something affected me such that as a person I didn't feel equal to you, for example, if you'd been in my class. I'd have thought, 'she's smarter than me, she's got this better than me, she's got that better than me.' I've never had self-confidence. It's something I struggle with every day of my life. Just before you came I was reading a review of William Golding's novel and this author was talking about his past novels. And there was one we had to study in college called *The Spire*, and it was about the building of a cathedral by a master builder in the middle ages. At the time I thought it was a terribly boring book. It was just loaded with all these stupid characters and images and I just hated it. But I didn't have the self-confidence to say anything about this to the professor. I just studied it and growled. This guy reviewing his new book, talks about *The Spire* as being too full of these incredible images, almost one of his worst novels, but it's studied diligently in modern colleges. Shit, you know! Where does it come from? I used to think it was probably to do with the fact that I was an ethnic in a WASP world, because I think that's important to my character.

Mary describes the ethnic influence in her life. Central to her identity was that she belonged to an Hispanic minority which aspired to the dominant WASP world.

> My values are what Mexican people value - it's a very traditional culture. They value a family; they value a wife that looks after the children. I don't know what it must be like for Mexican women out there on the job market. It must be very tough on them because they all have six or seven children. My being ethnic has affected my life to a great extent. See, the population where I grew up in the States is half Anglo, half Hispanic. And most of the Hispanics when I was growing up there, which is all I can talk about really, stuck together. They lived in the same neighborhoods - 'barios' they call them. They were all Catholic, which was a huge and very strong bind. They were all more or less the same class of people - blue collar workers and civil servants and laborers. The few of them that were not in that class - they were more Anglicized - were people that had businesses, or doctors.

> That set my parents aside because they were poor, they lived on the wrong side of the track, but they weren't Catholic. The school that I went to was a Presbyterian boarding school. So that set my parents apart a little bit from the rest of the hoi-polloi around us. In fact we went to a Spanish speaking church for a long time, till I was in junior high school or high school. And then my parents had a falling out with the minister and we joined the First Presbyterian Church, which was just WASP and wealthy people and doctors and lawyers. But all along there was this connection with the people in that church in my parent's family, but no friendships - just a social church thing and potluck dinners. The kids in the young peoples' groups were not my friends at school. The school I went to was the wrong side of the tracks school. In high school the divisions were a lot more blurred because of the fact that I had brains - I was in the honor society, in the band, and in some other clubs. I mixed with a lot of Anglo kids and I had friends in both worlds. And these two worlds did not usually get along with each other. There were a few of us mulattos in between, but the thing is that we all aspired to the WASP world. No one had a Spanish accent; you wanted to speak like a Texan or something like that. I hear my girlfriends down there and they talk with a southwestern Anglo drawl and it makes me so mad. I must have done it too. And we always wanted to be blondes.

Wanting to sound and look like an Anglo, Mary felt uncomfortable with her long black braids, and felt like a 'meatball' compared to the poised, cool blondes at her school. Her parents' joining of the Presbyterian church symbolizes to Mary her parents' rejection of their ethnicity, an act which reinforced her belief that she was not acceptable the way she was.

> I was uncomfortable with my physical self. I was overweight in junior high school and I had long, long braids. I could sit on my hair, and that set me apart from all the kids and I just felt awful. A big fat toad! I made my mother cut my hair when I went into grade seven and I lost weight and looked more like the rest of the kids. But I still didn't, I never felt physically great around anybody, especially in junior high school. Some of the girls there really blossomed in junior high. They wore nice clothing, they had nice figures, they had so much poise. And they still do. I mean some of these younger girls in high school now just shatter me because they're so cool. And back then, of course, you really believed that they were cool. You didn't realize that they were 16 year old smartasses. They were cool, but I was just a meatball in high school. And a part of it was because of being ethnic. I wanted to be in that world so badly. And my parents probably made me want it in certain ways because they set themselves apart sometimes too, from the rest of the neighbors. They didn't socialize with anybody. They always made a big fuss over the gang at the other church. It was something that they subconsciously wanted us to have.

Mary's grandparents also placed great value on upward mobility. Though they favored her and supported her going to college, she did not experience their support as positive. She was embarrassed by how they differentiated her from her brother and sister, and she rejected their dream that she should become a secretary and find a rich husband.

> And my grandparents certainly did, too. Oh yes, certainly they did! My mothers' parents I never met because they died before I was born. This was my dad's parents. My dad's parents - adopted parents - are sort of very upwardly mobile people. The thing that they value the most and my grandmother still values the most is the buck. She places a monetary value on relationships. How much she loves you is how much money she gives you, as

> opposed to the others. There was that thing with my brother and sister and me. 'We'll give Mary $25 and Larry and Patricia $5 each, because Mary was the first one; she's our favorite.' It was all this heavy number about my being the goddamn favorite grandchild! One Christmas a truck rolled up to our front yard, and unloaded a piano which was to be my Christmas present. A giant piano! But my brother and sister that year got a couple of little toys. Well, I could never enjoy that piano in my whole life. I ended up selling it to my sister for $300. She took it. She's no dummy. But that was the kind of trip they laid on me, plus the fact that I had to be either a secretary or a teacher to make it in the world. My grandfather's big thing was that I should be a secretary because, well he said, 'Secretaries make good money and smart ones are hard to find. You'll do very well if you become a secretary.' But I thought that was the end of the line. I had at least the brains to see that I wanted more of life than that. My grandparents were a strong influence in my life, though, when I was a kid. They always wanted me to go to college, but they also equated college with monetary gains. That I would find a rich husband in college, that was their real dream. Not that I would go to college and do anything on my own, but I would find a man, preferably rich, to look after me.

Reflecting on her mother's life, Mary explains that her mother dropped out of college to marry her father because of World War II, thereby giving up a bright future for a difficult life of babies and poverty. Recalling that she herself escaped from the commotion by withdrawing into her head and reading at an early age, Mary believes her mother wanted more for her than she had settled for.

> I was thinking about my mother today. Her mother died when she was 16 and she brought the rest of her younger brothers and sisters up. When she was old enough to go she was sent to university where she studied to be a teacher. And she is a born teacher! She's an elementary school teacher and she loves little children and she loves making little things for them and she's always sending my kids – that's one of her creations, that little Santa Claus thing. And yet I think she blew it because she married somebody like my dad, who was like 10 steps back for her. He didn't have a college education and in fact he has the kind of – you know, I really hate to talk about him this way because I do love him, but objectively I can say he has a very stale mental set. And he's very stubborn, he doesn't learn well, he's not willing to learn, he's not willing to change, and he's a very religious, repressive, guilty person. I see pictures of her from college days and she's beautiful, smiling with dimples in her face woman, and she married this guy. She didn't finish her degree. She had a semester to go and she got married because there was a war and all that. So then she got pregnant a month later and they moved away and lived on a base and had me. And she had three more babies within three years. It was just hell because they were so poor. They lived behind my grandparents in a two-room apartment and then they moved into a three-room house with bath, and that's where I grew up. Finally they got prosperous enough to buy the other half of the duplex and they turned it into bedrooms, so our house was two trains stuck together. No privacy, no hallways, no nothing – it's just one big commotion! The only place that you could ever withdraw to in my parents' house is up here (points to head), reading. And I became an avid reader from the very beginning, from the minute I could read. I taught myself how to read. My mother says I was reading by the time I was three; I was learning words. I must have really wanted to get away from the other kids, and my mom and my dad and everything. So Mom probably had a lot of personal reasons for wanting to seeing me carrying on and go a little bit further than she had.

Explaining the kind of home atmosphere she experienced as a child, Mary describes her

parents' relationship.

> My mother and father had a relationship based on my mother doing everything at her command to keep my father quiet. He was rigid when we were growing up and he was the one that wore the pants in the family, for sure. And because we were poor we were on a very strict budget; there was very little money for anything until I was in junior high school when things got a little better. But he had a terrible temper and the kids were always in trouble, and she was always trying to soothe the waters. I don't think they had a very good time of it because I have a lot of memories. He's a warm person, he's not all bad or anything. He was warm; he loves his family more than anything in the world; he focuses everything on his family. Everything! God and his family and his wife! He'd come into the kitchen and he'd give her a big hug and fondle her or kiss her; he loves her dearly. In fact it's really a pedestal sort of thing he has for her. And maybe that's what appealed to her– the fact that there was a man who had her on a pedestal. But they were so unalike, they were so unlike. She loved dancing, for instance; he thinks dancing is a sin. She used to have dates; she used to go out with different fellows in college. About five years ago there was a 30 or 40 years reunion at their high school or their college there, and a friend of hers came up and hugged her, embraced her – a male friend. And my father, on the way home, just let her have it – called her all kinds of names. So this is the kind of guy my dad is.

The tension between her parents around their sexual relationship, combined with her father's negative reaction toward Mary's developing sexuality, resulted in Mary feeling guilty and conflicted about herself.

> And my sister, I've asked my sister a lot about their sex life, what she knows about it. And she says that my mother did not like sex, never did, and that my father was always on her, even when she was tired – she used to tell my sister that. And God knows, you know, having three kids under two, who wants to screw? You just chance getting it again. So she must just have been exhausted. By the time I was cognizant of the fact that people were sexual, I think there was a lot of tension between them. Because I can remember I could feel it, I could sense it. So I'm afraid I learned the wrong things from that. I saw problems. I learned that husbands should be pushed away and that mothers should be always tired and working hard all the time. I don't know. In fact the counsellor that I talked to when I divorced George said, 'Well was George like your father? Did you marry him because he was like your father?' Of course I always reject that because my father and I clashed horribly when I became an adolescent – that was another byproduct of this. He made me feel so guilty about wanting to go out, wanting to be with kids, with boys, going to dances. I was just in a complete and utter bind. You know those feelings, when you're a teen–ager, are so strong. And at that time too, one of the important things that was happening to teen–age kids my age was music. And the rock and roll music at the time was very, very erotic. I can still remember listening to Elvis Presley and all these characters on the Ed Sullivan Show, and my father sitting in the living room, a little black cloud over his head, and me just sitting, wishing that I could enjoy it. But there was no way that I could express any reaction to what was going on. So I think I repressed a lot of things. I think it was probably the worst thing that happened when I was growing up because it made me ashamed, I guess, of my sexual nature. The fact that my father felt so violently against anything like that. And yet here he was giving my mother big hugs and kisses in the kitchen. So it was okay on some level up here, but not underneath. It wasn't okay for me. It wasn't okay for anybody down deep. We had some awful clashes when I was a kid, really awful.

At the same time Mary's mother reacted positively to her becoming a woman and it

seems that she eventually over-ruled Mary's father's objections.

> The feelings from my mother are very vague though. I mean she used to do things like make me dresses for dancing. So it was sort of tacit encouragement. I don't know who connived who, but I went to my senior prom. I had never had a date, but I got a blind date, because my aunt had sent me this incredible evening dress - a beautiful, beautiful teenager's dream evening dress, beautiful lace and strapless. But I didn't have a date for the bloody dance, so I had to go out and find one. And my father didn't say much, and in fact it's very strange because after my senior prom I started going out with this guy. Not my blind date, another fellow that I had sort of been acquainted with. And it got very hot and heavy and we were out almost every night that summer of my senior year after graduation. My father never said a word to me about being out every night or anything. One of his rules was that I couldn't sit next to him on the sofa when he was visiting. Maybe he gave my mother an earful, probably, but he never said anything to me.

Understanding why her father is the way he is, Mary again expresses concern for passing on to her children, especially her daughter, the self-consciousness she learned as a child.

> A very strange man. I know why he's like that - because of the way he was brought up. And understanding that helps me understand him. But I think all the same, that when one sits down and thinks about one's past, one should be able to leave some of it behind, so that you don't impose it on innocent parties. That's what I hope I don't do with Sara and Teddy. But Sara most of all, because I think girls are so vulnerable. Boys have, in this world, all kinds of encouragement to go out and do things. And here's his father out travelling, out doing this and getting awards; and here I am, home. I'm not going to stay home because I think I owe it to her to get out and do something a little more productive. This German guy that was working around our house this fall, I really like him a lot. He'd come in for coffee sometimes and Sara would really like him, because she's a very loving kid. And he said to me one day, 'God, what a spirit, you know.' He said, 'I wonder how long she'll be able to keep it?' Well, ever since he said that to me I thought, 'Oh shit! It's true!'

Away from home at college, Mary discovered that men found her attractive. Being free to go dancing and to be socially acceptable felt great, except that Mary had already learned that most men were 'mashers' and that she had to be careful.

> Funnily enough, in college I discovered that I was physically attractive to men. I hadn't been dating in high school at all. Nobody ever asked me out except one guy with a lot of zits. He asked me out and I turned him down. So I never had any dates, except for senior graduation. After graduation I went out with one boy a lot - it was really heavy. But then I went away to college and I found out that men wanted to ask me out, but they wanted one thing, you know. Most of them were mashers. Either they were mashers or I was so out of it that I didn't realize what the norm was. But it seemed to me that they were all pretty fresh. And I went into this thing of being very cold. I'd go out with a few guys - nice ones, because I was pretty careful who I went out with. And I wouldn't have kissed good night.
> But back to 1963, going to college was very good really because I was on my own there. I could go to dances! I could dance! Men were attracted to me! That was wonderful! I really felt great! In fact I think what happened to me in college was that that part of me took precedence over school. It was something I had to get through. I was being sociably successful for a change. Another part of being a woman that I haven't really talked about is my

> sexuality. It's had its ups and downs over the years, I'll tell you that. It was a real rush in college for example, learning that I was attractive for the first time. I thought at first it was because I had black hair and everybody else was blond. But then it was tainted with these guys wanting to screw me when I was only a sophmore in high school. Mashers! They'd come up and grab my boobs and I just couldn't cope with it at all. So it was a very up and downy thing there.

Unfortunately for Mary, her new found freedom led to an unsatisfactory involvement with a married man. After that ended she became involved with a man who seemed her ideal.

> It backfired on me when I was a senior because I got involved with this idiot who was married. But I didn't break up the marriage; it was already on the rocks when I ran into this guy. I think that I fell for him, hook, line and sinker. It was a totally, 'I'll do anything you want to make you feel better', sort of relationship. I wanted to just give to this guy till he was okay. And he just took it and spit on it and stepped on it and threw it away. And along comes George – Mr. Scholar, Mr. Steady, Mr. Farmer, Mr. Everything, looking like the rock of Gibralter, and I just latched onto him for all I was worth. And that had a huge effect on my life. You see, at this college you met such a broad section of humanity – rich kids, poor kids; I mean I could have married a rich boy there. I could have done the right thing. In fact I was sort of interested in one but I thought, 'Oh this guy is just too weird.' I just sort of realized after a while that money isn't it with these guys, because they're either spoiled or they're gay or they're assholes or all of the above. And I was attracted very much to George because he was poor. He was as poor as a church mouse. Our big date was buying toast and tea at an Italian restaurant. I ended up marrying the guy and divorcing him five years later, because he was the wrong person to marry. But it was a luxury for me to be able to divorce him, instead of being married to him all my life. But getting back to being a woman in college, well, the whole social bit took over to the point where that's all I saw for a long time. I made no plans for my future as a person and looking after myself. I made some really dumb mistakes like marrying George and following him to the East. And then I followed him to the East with the teaching job. I surprised him one day by announcing to him that, 'I've got a teaching job 40 miles away from you.' So I went there. It was okay. I mean I had to be on my own for a year.

Mary feels that marrying George instead of planning her own future was a mistake. Another mistake she thinks she made was to succumb to her mother's pressure that she become a teacher.

> Another mistake I made was taking teaching courses. I was not interested in it. I hated it! I was not doing very well but I went through the motions and I got my teaching certificate. That I did so that I could please my mother. I'd always been sort of programmed, I think by my mother. My mother worked, she wasn't a stay-at-home mother. But she didn't start working until we were in school. But she always had her own income and I had that model before me. I was always steered to college. That was completely understood, that I would go to school and get a job so that I could support myself. But that job was to be teaching or being a librarian. It was something that would be a steady, safe, secure way of earning a living. I went along with it because I was a very unquestioning person. By the time I got to college, all of the curiousity or daring that I had about life was pretty much under the rug. I don't know how it happened, but it happened. It's just been dawning on me lately that that's what happened to me.

Mary accidently discovered in college that she enjoyed music. However, the pressure

from her family to pursue a safe and steady career plus her own lack of confidence resulted in her acceptance of music as a leisure activity rather than a serious pursuit.

> I discovered it really by accident at the time. I took some classes but I didn't pursue it seriously in school because of a lot of reasons.
> At college they had a trimester system; they had two long semesters and for the month of January a little semester where it was a great pass/fail system. And we took anything we wanted from any of the courses offered, and just did it all day long for a month. It was a great chance to try something new and I took the flute the first time they offered it. I had played in high school a bit. And I just fell hook, line and sinker for that. But I never really thought that it was something that I could do. And again music is where you really have to have confidence in yourself because it's right out there; people are listening to you and looking at you. Right now! Scholarly efforts are sort of more private. I did okay. I took a minor in music as a result of that, but it was more, 'This is sort of a luxury thing.' I did okay. I got better grades in music than I did in teaching because I liked it more. The teacher thing threw up a clinker in my life, because it prevented me from pursuing music seriously.

From her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?", we see that Mary does indeed regret that she did not pursue a career in music. She also regrets that she did not have the confidence to voice her opinions in college.

> I regret not having been more outspoken in school, not having made the most of those four years. And not pursuing something that I really, really cared for, really cared about.

Reflecting on what college meant to her, Mary explains that a career was important only as a backup, in case something should happen to the man in her life. Finding a husband was more important.

> I don't know, I think I used my sex to sort of get a man, not really to get a good education. I sort of view myself as doing that. My primary job in college was not to learn, not to explore my possibilities or prepare for the future, to stand on my own two feet. What did that mean to me? It meant so that if a man left me I could support my kids, that's what it meant – if my husband got sick and died. It was never the career. I never, never wanted to be a woman in the world without a man.

For many years Mary worked to develop a secure career, beginning with the teaching career she pursued for her mother.

> Over the years I spent one year teaching English and two years in a library, a year at home and then working part-time as a receptionist for a doctor. And then I went back to school. I went back in English to bring up my grade point and I worked really hard and I brought it up, and I got admitted into Library School. Because I still felt that urge to do something that would give me more career security. At that time I realized that my marriage was really on the rocks.

After working for several years as a librarian and then as an editor she has just now decided to pursue art again, having finally decided it is time to please herself.

> The current thing that's going on with me right now is that I've decided to go back into my first real discovery in college, which was art. In fact the other night when my grandmother phoned I told her I was taking art classes again and she just said, 'But you'll never make any money. Why don't you do something that will bring you some money?' I said, 'I've got a BA in English and I have a Library Science degree. Can I please do something that I really like now? Don't you think I've done enough?' And she said, 'Well, all right.' It was just a very funny moment for me.

Turning back in time Mary explains that marriage to George seemed wonderful at first, especially in comparison to her previous relationship and her unsatisfactory teaching career. Her decision to marry George was deliberate – he was a professor and she liked the academic life–style. It was also nice to be with George in the beginning because he encouraged her studies and liked to talk.

> Being married to George – well that was the all–American dream. I wanted him so much because to me, looking back on it now, he represented a haven from a horrible world that I had had a touch of with this rotten affair I'd had at school. And with being out on the stumps trying to get a goddamn teaching job that I hated. See, I went right from home to college to George. I never was on my own at all. Another reason I really married George I think, was because I thought seriously about the kind of life that I wanted. I really liked being around a university; I still am magnetically attracted to campus. And I thought, 'God, you know, you're around young people all your life and people that are interesting, and finanacially you're secure.' I just made all these rational choices and decisions in the back of my mind and poor old George was it. He was the lucky guy. And he broke up I think about two romances after I got on his trail. One woman tried to kill herself over him. I said to him, 'God, if I'd have known that, I'd have let her have you.' It was so important to her. He really provoked a lot of feeling in women because he treated them well. He wasn't a pig. He encouraged me in my studies and taking classes. And he talked! He liked to talk; he wasn't a masher. He was a very dear person in a lot of ways.

However, as time went on Mary perceived George becoming threatened by her growing ambitions. He tried to control her – what she did, what she wore, what she thought – and she felt stifled. Prior to this their marriage had a fairytale quality, with her playing the role of 'Mrs. Professor.' Looking back Mary realizes that their relationship had always been cemented by a third party – another man who completed their combo.

> He only became a pain in the ass as he got more threatened by the fact that I wanted to do something. That was part of it. Another part of it was that he contributed to my dissatisfaction – he became like my father. It was a crazy thing. You marry somebody because he is like a father to you and in fact he becomes that. It was almost a self–fulfilling prophecy or something. Because after awhile he was telling me what I should wear and what I should think and how I should wear my hair and what kind of pants I should buy, and I spent too much on these shoes. And when I was thinking, he wanted to know what I was thinking all the time. I just felt completely stifled in that relationship. I couldn't stand it, and he didn't have the brains at the time to let me have some air. He just kept trying to pull closer as I kept trying to push faster. But I had wanted to be the perfect wife for him. I wanted to be perfect Mrs.Professor. He didn't make it easy because he was so cheap. He's a real tightwad sometimes. But I had the dinner parties for eight, with menus that I wrote out. We didn't want to have children because we had an

> idea what it would be like and neither one of us really wanted to face that scene. Wisely so! I think I would have been just shattered by it. So we had a kind of a fairy tale existence for about a year and a half. We were going out a lot; a lot of graduate students were our age. We became very close to two of them. George and I always had another man around; the three of us would be together. It would be a combo. In graduate school it was roomie Harry, and somehow Harry and George, to me, made a perfect man. I think I was as much in love with Harry as I was with George. But Harry and I weren't sleeping together. And I think that's really an interesting discovery that I made at some point, not too long ago. I thought to myself, 'I could have married Harry.' In fact I would have probably been happier because he and I were the ones that would sort of be the central planners. We would organize things. Anyway, we came to Edmonton and made a threesome with Roger. I wasn't attracted to Roger because he was a bit too sleazy for me, but we had a good time all the same, the three of us.

The marriage deteriorated to a point where a third party could no longer absorb all the stress between Mary and George. Central to their difficulty, or indicative of it, were their sexual problems. In the early years before they were married, sex had been great. However, after they were married it seemed to Mary that something went wrong. It seemed to her that sex for George was calculated and kinky, and she withdrew. Experiencing a lack of healthy sexuality in her marriage, she became attracted to another man.

> I guess my relationship with George was a very daring one for me because it was a sexual one and it was good. We had a real good sex life when he was in graduate school and I was teaching. I'd go see him on the weekends. We had wonderful times. That was when people were all sitting around, smoking dope, listening to the Beatles, eating balogna sandwiches and screwing. And I was right in there with everybody else, having a wonderful time. It was great! Sex was wonderful! And then something happened and it just got screwed up, after we were married. My first clue that something was wrong was on our honeymoon. That jerk – and he now accepts the fact that he was a jerk – wanted me to pose nude for him with his polaroid. And I couldn't believe it! Where did this come from? This was something that I didn't know about this guy. I refused. We had an awful tiff. He made me feel really bad and he didn't ever do it again. From then on he started to exhibit a very kinky streak. Well, for me it was kinky. I mean for other people maybe it wasn't but for me it was a little bit kinky. He wanted to screw in the kitchen, on the floor, in front of the stereo, on a rug, in the bathroom, in the shower. Well, you know, normally that would be okay, but there was something about the way he brought it up. It was a very sort of calculated thing. 'Let's get stoned and screw in the shower; let's get stoned and screw on the rug.' It was always so that you're just an object, part of the whole thing. 'I'll wear my earphones' sort of thing. He really ruined me sexually for a long time because I always felt that there was something wrong with me, that I was not normal, that there was something very repressed about me. Oh there were a couple of times when we got going in one of these crazy situations and it was fine, but it didn't happen very often. And I have a very quirky mind. If I start screwing George or Ralph or anybody that I've ever made love with in my life, and I have a flash that it's somehow not together, that the guy is using me, that's it! I can't perform anymore. I may go through the rest of it, but it sure ain't fun. And that was the way it was with George almost 90 percent of the time, after we were married. Every night was a big scene. It was really awful! Really, really awful! Finally I couldn't bring myself to screw him at all. And then I met this lovely young man who – there it was – pow! All over again the way it had been before with George and me. And there I was, a married

> woman, and I had all these things going on. I told George about it right away. One of my girl friends said, 'God, don't say anything, it might blow over! Just don't let your right hand know what your left hand's doing.' But I just couldn't do it; I had to tell him. I told him and he wasn't threatened because David was so young. He thought it was just a flash in the pan. I guess it was, but the whole sexuality thing just had to come out somewhere. I was just missing a whole side of myself.

The deterioration of their sexual life led to George's assumption that Mary was crazy and should see a doctor. The doctor prescribed tranquillizers and sent Mary to a therapist who assumed that she was spoiled and wanted to be put on a pedestal. Mary rejected the therapist's analysis but recognized that she had not been taking charge of her life.

> I went to a doctor because George told me that I was crazy and I should go see a shrink, because I wasn't screwing him. We were having horrible times! This was even before I met David. I was having really bad sexual problems. And she took one look at me – I must have looked like I'd been hit in the face with a sledgehammer – and she said, 'Tell me what's wrong.' And I burst into tears and she sort of talked. She was really, really great and put me on Elavils, and sent me to a social worker, who may not have been the best choice for me. But I stayed with her because I admired her bluntness. She kind of gave me a kick in the butt. Her whole theory about me was that I was spoiled and that I wanted to be put on a pedestal and I wanted to be like my mother. And that I always thought the world was too hard for little Mary. 'Why should little Mary have to get a job, why should little Mary have to work, why should she suffer?' She thought I just wanted to be a spoiled darling all my life. I believed her, because I had been spoiled. I think now that she was a little bit off base about things. I don't think that my whole life I wanted to be on a pedestal. I did try being independent to get away from my parents, and I married George because he didn't put me on a pedestal. I didn't like fawning men. I never have liked a fawning person. I don't know, I think she was a little bit wrong about it in some ways. Maybe I was expecting to be looked after – I'd been brought up to be looked after. The school they sent me to, they only sent me that far from home because it was Presbyterian affiliated. They wouldn't have sent me anywhere else that far if it hadn't been. But they thought I'd be sent to a nunnery. It turned out not to be a nunnery at all. My mother said to me this summer, 'The biggest mistake of my life was sending you to that school.' I said, 'Mom, you couldn't have done me a bigger favor.' She said, 'What do you mean? You were going out; you met that man; you were drinking; you were smoking dope. You never came home again.' 'Yeah, right, right! Isn't that what kids are supposed to do? You wanted me to come home and live with you?' Oh dear! I always wanted to get away from the safe. I didn't marry the guy back home because I didn't want to go back. I always thought going back there would be a regressive step in my life.

Mary left George and began to sort out her life. She rejected her young lover and discovered friendships with women. However, she felt nervous and guilty, and needed tranquilizers to help her cope.

> After George and I split up I was alone for four months without seeing him, because that was the advice of my doctor. I was having an affair with this guy, David, at the time, and it was really hard for George. Well about a month after I'd moved out into my little leased apartment I just looked at this guy and I thought, 'What am I doing with this kid?' He was five years younger than me and he was into the co-op life, and I had been a married woman with an

> established household and I didn't want to go back in time that way, that far. I didn't want that lifestyle, so I just sort of ended the relationship, like kaput! Like all it took was just being away from George to see that this guy was just a catalyst. He was just there. He's a very nice person. I see him once in a while. There was a great physical thing there. He was beautiful, just a beautiful young man. Unfortunately he has a very debilitating progressive disease, I think it's in his bones, in his muscles, his muscles atrophy. His legs are like skeleton's legs really; he hardly has any energy to walk. That made it even harder for me to say, 'Hey, this is it!' But I did. So that time I was on my own. I think that's when I really became aware of the fact that there were women out there living alone. They didn't need men around; they treated men like they treated their women friends, on that level. 'You can be my friend.' I became fairly close to a couple of women at that time. One was going through the same thing that I was. We stuck very close together but we both didn't really have time to discover that we could have stayed on our own, because we both married again. It was a very heart-in-the-throat sort of time for me, and it was exciting, but I was always scared. I didn't get over being scared for quite awhile. I was really nervous about being on my own. I took Elavils for a long time, for about a year from the time that I hit the skids with this affair with David. I couldn't cope with it – I mean my guilt was overwhelming. It was just terrible!

From Mary's answer to the question, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?" we learn that the Women's Movement was a meaningful part of her life at this time. She describes reading feminist books which helped her to make sense of her experience and which exposed the problems in her marriage. And again she mentions discovering friendships with women.

> God, you know, when I was breaking up with George one of the contributing factors to the demise of our shaky marriage was the Women's Movement. I started to attend a reading group and that's where I met a lot of women. I really felt that it was ringing bells all over. *The Female Eunuch* was the first book I had read and I just thought, 'This is it! This is the gospel truth!' It was just too much! I couldn't believe it. But it poured the waters through all the holes in my marriage. George realized that it was going to happen because he was incredibly threatened by it all. And he was right because it added one of the nails to the coffin. And after I left, two of my women friends helped me move out – not two that were in that reading club, but two women that I knew and I became very close with. That was the first time I had ever had friendships with women that were serious. It had never happened to me before. I guess college is the time of seriousness, but you're so flippant and so young and stupid then. All you have is a few good conversations. So really, it was the first time for me. I realized the value of that connection.

In spite of gaining new insights and developing friendships with women, breaking off her relationships, first with her husband and later with her lover, was still difficult for Mary. In answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?" she describes her feeling of having the power to hurt (which was intermingled with guilt) which she perceived as negative.

> Well I think the first time that it happened, that I realized that I had a power to really hurt somebody, was when I was breaking up with George. That was about four or five years ago now. I guess before I really didn't realize that sort of power. It had a terrible effect on him for awhile and in fact it did on other people that I was involved with at the time – my friends and the fellow I was seeing. That's a negative, I view that as a negative example. In those days all my feelings were so confused – confusion and guilt and sort of rushes of freedom and whatever else I was experiencing on the positive side. I think that the feelings of power were only mingled with that. The overriding feeling was that of guilt, that I had hurt George. And later when I broke off the relationship with the guy I was seeing, that I had hurt him too and that I wasn't really in control, that I was not using my control at all. Particularly in the latter case. The way I broke off with the guy I was having an affair which was just one night, that was it. And this had been an affair of over a year, off and on. I just came to the realization one day that I couldn't have anything more to do with him, and I still don't really know the exact whys and wherefores. It just seemed obvious to me at the time that it was totally wrong for both of us, especially for me, and I just couldn't go on with it. It was just sort of as he called it later, a shit-canning. It was just boom! That was it! Over! I didn't see him again for a long time after that, but apparently it threw him into a complete and horrible tailspin. It was a cruel thing to do. I did it because I think I was desperate, and it was him or me at that point. That was what I meant by not being in control. I think if I had been more in control I would have been able to manipulate that situation a little better. Even though I needed to get away from him for my sanity's sake, I would have been a little more thoughtful about the way I did it. It was an out of control gesture.

Establishing a life on her own meant to Mary not going back to her parents' home, but rather building on the life she had already established in Edmonton. Just as she was settling into a routine on her own she met Ralph, a man with whom she felt several connections.

> When George and I split up my parents begged me to go back to the States but I knew that would be a regressive step. I wanted to be on my own. I had my friends. I had a few friends. I had a world, an established sort of thing here. I didn't want to give that up. In fact if Ralph and I ever split up I think I'd probably stay where my friends are. I have in Edmonton a little niche for myself. Anyway, I was just beginning to realize that I could be happy on weekends puttering around, that I could have friends over, that I could do things, that I could go out. I had a job by that time. It wasn't very long, just a few months. I met old Ralph around Christmas, just about the time I was supposed to have my reunion with George. I don't think it was long enough, actually. I should have stayed alone for a year, but what happened with Ralph and me was that he seemed to me to have gone through a lot of things. He had had an affair with a woman and it hadn't worked out. And I thought, 'He must know what it means for a person to have their own life.' And in fact, he does. He learned a lot from his women. He made his mistakes and learned a lot I think. And that appealed to me a lot. I didn't see him as a father figure, or as a safe, secure thing. I thought he would like a family life. That sort of rang a bell back there somewhere. George never wanted children. I used to think during those four months that I did eventually want children.

Mary and Ralph married and now have two small children, just 18 months apart. What this has meant to Mary is that just as she was establishing herself as an independent person in a new career, she suddenly had the additional responsibilities of infant children and a home. The effect on Mary of living in these circumstances is

internal conflict. She is torn between her work as an editor and her work as a mother and homemaker, between her desire to achieve her own potential and her desire to nurture her children. Although she had decided to defer her career for the time being, Mary is still in the process of working out her feelings about the conflict she experiences.

> But I don't think I was on my own enough because I still think that I am on the verge of going back; I'm on the verge of giving up. Well that's the word I've used about writing. I give up! I quit! I can't take it anymore. I can't do the free-lance work. It doesn't pay well enough. I can't even do the full-time, everyday work because I come home and it's just too much for me. And I just quit! And in a way I want to do it because I like being out in the world, I mean who wouldn't? Who wouldn't like to be out there doing a job, dressing up every day and buying things, having your own money? I hope I'm not making a mistake staying home now because I have to balance it on the one hand with my work as a writer. I'm beginning to learn a lot about it. I didn't learn much when I was first working as a writer because I had just come in from a library job and three months later I became the chief writer of this place and I didn't know anything about it. Virginia has taught me a lot. Virginia is a very smart woman and she has really worked hard at her job. She's very, very professional. I think I could be on the verge of really learning, having a good career base as they call it. So my resigning from life, career life for awhile, might be harmful to that. But it might not be, you know. Who cares? I think it's important that the kids - they're the main thing. My whole family life just goes to shit when I'm working. I am so cross all the time, and I don't want to hate my kids. Most of the time I resent them when I'm working. They're intruding on my space, intruding on my ironing, my washing, my cooking, my shopping on the week-end.

That Mary now realizes that she needed more time between marriages to become secure in herself is evidenced again in her answer to the question, 'What do you regret or resent in your life?' As she explains it becomes clear that she doesn't regret the relationship she began with Ralph, but that an unplanned pregnancy rushed their commitment and shortened her period of time she needed to get to know herself.

> Well I regret not being on my own more between marriages. Leaving my first marriage was really an attempt to be grown up - George had encouraged the childlike qualities in me, like dependence and girlishness. In fact his nickname for me was 'Baby'. And yet, along with encouraging the qualities of being dependent and all that, he criticized me for not thinking things through, planning out properly, attending to details, being aggressive. So I think I just had to break away from that relationship to grow up. So unfortunately I don't think I spent enough time on my own. I wasn't consciously thinking of what I needed to do at that time though, that I needed to be alone. I was so frightened of being on my own that I'd plan every evening to have something to do - I'd go out a lot or I'd have friends in or sometimes if I had nothing to do I'd go down to Mike's Newsstand to look at magazines. I was so scared to be alone. And when Ralph came along he had the qualities I admired and he was steady. I didn't have romantic feelings for him. It was more a response to a person I knew would be decent, intelligent and cultured, and I couldn't let him out of my life. I was just beginning to get over that feeling of being scared on my own and enjoy some of it when I moved in with him. I think I'd always wanted a family more than a career and that's what Ralph represented to me. He had a family here that he was close to and he valued the family unit

> and holds it high in esteem to this day. George had been cynical about the family. I don't know what I would have done with my time on my own then, except pursue the library career I was into, or the writing. I would have probably been more independent financially, travelled maybe. But you don't meet interesting people when you're single – it's hard to anyway. When you're down you attract people like you, I think – you attract unstable people. The only interesting person I met during that time was Ralph. When we decided to live together Ralph and I weren't talking about marriage – it was just a relationship. I worked so I had a job and my own money. So I was independent that way. I don't regret getting involved with Ralph actually. I think the pregnancy was the thing that made it permanent and maybe that's what we should have avoided, not the relationship. Because we had a lot to iron out before we made it permanent. But I wasn't about to have an abortion. And I wouldn't want to go on record as saying I'm sorry I had a baby.

Another conflict Mary experiences involves her marriage and the unequal sharing of responsibilities for child care and household maintenance that she experiences. She is worried about having damaged the marriage by her insistence that her husband help her in the home and by the added pressure that her working outside puts on them both. Mary also experiences conflict in withdrawing from active involvement in her editing career. She feels negative about giving up her independence and about her husband's assumption that as the mother, she is the one who *should* sacrifice herself for the good of all. On the positive side, giving up her editing work means she is reducing the pressure in her marriage by eliminating an area of stress. It also gives her time to explore her earlier discovered but neglected interest in playing the flute.

> I hate Ralph because he's not doing more. I mean I think I've damaged our relationship badly enough by insisting on certain things. I think Ralph is a great person and he's guilt–ridden enough such that he will see that there is work to be done and do it. But he spends a lot of time watching TV on the weekend, watching sports events like a real jock. And he doesn't have a lot of energy. I married a guy that when he comes home he just goes flop. I mean I've seen him in action at work and he is just giving 100 percent of his energy to the situation. When he comes home he just doesn't want to do that anymore. He just collapses into this sodden heap. And the kids tire him out terribly. So when I insist – maybe I've handled it badly – I just say, 'Do that! That needs being done! Fold these clothes! Get out here and help me make supper! Clear the table!' And he says, 'Leave me alone!' We have big fights about things like that because he doesn't do it. He doesn't see that the kitchen is a mess and that I can use some help in there. I have to ask him. So I still have the responsibility for all of that; I have responsibility for the laundry and making sure that it's all done. He says, 'I'll iron some shirts while I watch TV on the weekend,' but he never does it. It makes me very angry and I begin to get so resentful that I'm just worried that I'll just explode, and there goes another marriage down the drain. That's a lot of the reason that I've decided not to work at an outside job for awhile, so that I can take the pressure off. Ralph said the other day, because I had to finish the magazine article I've been writing – in fact I just got rid of it yesterday or I wouldn't be able to talk to you. I had it on my mind for a month while it's been around here. Virginia's been a real brick because there's been one catastrophe after another here. Mom and dad and the kids being sick, and me just not being able to get to it for some reason or another. I finally got it done and Ralph said that he thinks it's a good thing I'm not going to be doing any more work,

> because my mental health, my mental attitude affects the whole family. So I've been a real bear to live with the last month, needless to say. And I said, 'Well that's fine for you to say.' I got mad at him. And I get mad at him too much and I just don't want to go through another marriage disaster. Ralph's a very romantic soul and he's very soft and he's very gentle and he doesn't want to see that side of me. He's seeing it all too often. I was trying to make dinner the other night; he'd come home from work late – this is just an example because it's fresh in my mind – I was making dinner and the kids were screaming and hollering. Sara was sick and I had this thing to work on, and I wanted to get them fed so I could proofread after that. Teddy turned all the lights off in the livingroom and Ralph said, 'Mary, come here. I want you to see this.' And I had my hands wet, washing dishes, and I was trying to hurry and didn't want to be bothered, but went in anyway. He was standing with his arms across his chest, in the dark. The kids were bouncing off the walls. And he stood there and he said, 'You know, just look at that.' And I looked at it – it was dark. He said, 'If we ever get enough money, we should really get a fireplace. It would be so lovely in here.' This is after the fact that we have spent $8000 on renovating this house and on paying Chargex. I looked at him and I said, 'You called me in here to tell me that, when I'm trying to get dinner ready?' I mean my reaction was just, 'You bastard!' He got mad; oh, did he get mad. He said, 'Fine! There's nothing anymore! All you can think about is the terrible state that our lives are in. You can't even think about any of the nice things.' In other words, 'Why can't you be wonderful, sweet and romantic? Why do you always have to be such a drag?' And that's what our clashes have been about in the last year. Why am I such a drag? That's what it boils down to. And I don't want to be a drag anymore. I just think, 'Well, maybe I should try to take the pressure off him, do other things for awhile.' The kids will be out of my hair daytimes. Teddy will be four in April, and I can in the meantime play the cello and take some more lessons because he and I both think that that's where I should be. And I would really like to have a chance at it. I've been doing progressing well. So with that carrot before my nose I'm willing to give up the independence that a part-time – half-assed is what it's been – career gives me.

Mary's conflict is further complicated by her feelings of inadequacy in relation to her freelance jobs. Her guilt about leaving her children with a babysitter and about her lack of feeling connected to them when she returns home is also part of her conflict. Further, although she recognizes that she and her husband have had to cope with an inordinate amount of stress, she still tends to see the problem as *hers*, as relating to the amount of time and energy *she* doesn't have, the job *she* isn't doing.

> I really feel that I'm making the right decision, for the career. Because I don't think that I do a very good job for people. I think Virginia has been awfully kind about the work I've done for her book. The galleys came back with all kinds of editor's corrections to be made. I don't know what it's going to cost them. It's going to be incredibly expensive. Plus it's taken me a long time to get the work done. One association has hired me to be their executive director, which means I handle all their correspondence for the organization, make up a budget, direct the preparation of the catalogues and things. And it sounded like a pretty good little job. Because they pay me an honorarium and it could lead to something quite nice down the road. I could apply for a grant for my own salary, in effect. But I have done absolutely nothing. I go to the meetings and I haven't done this, I haven't done that and I'm really worried that I'm just going to end up making a big failure of it and getting fired. So I'm feeling, now that this book is finished, I've just got to get back on this other stupid job and try to salvage it. I was hired in a bit of a furor because someone else wanted the job very badly, but the association didn't want him because he's a bit of an old fart. I think he's great; I've always been very fond

> of him. But anyway, there was an incredible ruckus. So you know, there I am, out on a limb and I'm sawing it off. Sawing off my own limb. So I have to just make up my mind. The problem is I have no time and no energy. I can't cope with all these things. And I was taking the art classes. They were actually top priority for me. And it took me away from the house for two days. Weekends are not working times for me. I don't get anything done on the weekends. It's family chores. And then Ralph's parents being sick in the hospital. His dad having a stroke has meant that Ralph has not been here as much, even on a weekend. He's always scurrying about after them, and his energies are even more dissipated because that's a big problem – what to do with his old man, his mother and all that. So he's been torn apart by that. His job promotion was great, but it means that he's thinking a lot more about other things, and I guess I just feel that it's time to condense. I've got to cut down whatever I can, and the first thing that I can cut down on is my outside work. Sara and Teddy, I'm not really doing as much for them as I thought I was in the beginning, because I think they coped pretty darn well with babysitters. Teddy especially bitches and complains about Benita because she scolds them and she gives them shit – she doesn't take anything from them. He says he hates her and he doesn't want to see her coming and all of this, but I don't think it's hurt them at all to have me out of the house. I haven't been out of the house every day. But see, when I come home from work, I'm not there. I don't read to them aloud or cuddle them, unless it's bedtime. I just want to do a good job with the kids basically. I think the kids are more important right now to me.

Mary states that she doesn't have enough energy for her children when she is working, and feels this is a good reason to not do outside work. The larger threat, however, seems to be the potential of a second marriage breakdown. She believes that her husband feels threatened by women who act independently and thinks he chose her because she seems to be a homebody. Thus, deferring her career seems to represent a solution to a number of problems: it will reduce the stress in her marriage, will allow her to renew her energy for her children and will reduce her own anxiety.

> And my marriage with Ralph, because that's really going into some bad times. We've had some terrible times where we don't even fight. We just sort of hate each other quietly. I get phobic about him and he gets phobic about me. So I think if I don't do something like that we'll be in for an even worse time. Ralph pays lip service to the fact that women should be out there working and he doesn't like people like Donna very much and he's threatened by Virginia, he's threatened by you, he's threatened by Dorothy. He doesn't put it down because he knows better than that, but it's kind of a little 'Hah–hah–hah, Virginia is coming over tonight? Oh, is she going to encourage you to leave your husband and children?' That kind of crack. And he thinks that she's fast. I say, 'You can have all the fantasies you want about Virginia. You go right ahead, live it up!' I think Ralph married me because I'm not a Virginia. I'm not a you. I'm not an independent, feminist person. He married me because I was sort of out there, I looked like I might be, but scratch the surface and you find a real homebody, a person that likes her home, that would rather be home, I guess, than out on the job because that's the kind of choices I make, I'm making right now. And I think he knew, he could sense that. Maybe that's why he and Lyla didn't make it. I think she probably put too much pressure on that relationship. So, I don't know. Being a woman has certainly caught me with a vengence, because now that I see what a person should do with their life, it seems like I'm going to have to wait a few years before I can get out there and start really doing what I want to do. I'm deferring it. But at least I'm doing it consciously. That's a victory I guess. And I'm deffering for reasons, you know, my marriage, my children and my mental health.

In spite of the positive reasons she finds for staying home, Mary is afraid that she is again losing a part of herself that is important. Indicative that something is wrong for her is her lack of interest in sex.

> That's what I'm afraid of happening now, again. Because when I met Ralph he was wonderful. He was a wonderful lover; he was great! It was all very nice. For the first time in my life, when I was with him, I thought, 'This is the way a normal, clean sex life should be. Everybody's happy.' But even when we were living together Ralph started doing crazy things. I remember one night I wanted to light the candle and he just made some awful crack about it, and from then on it was lights off and under the covers. And sometimes it would even be rejection from him. And I don't know why he did it. I've asked him many times, I mean I haven't let it go by, and he doesn't know why. At least he hasn't thought about it hard enough. I think it was because he was afraid that I was using him like another David, because I made the mistake of telling him about that relationship and it had been a very physical one. From that point on it was not the same at all. It's been okay off and on; it's had its real ups and downs, real ups and downs! But on the whole I think I really love Ralph and he really loves me and so we kind of work things out. And he's very, very understanding. I mean we've gone for a month, more than that, without making love at all because of me. And he accepts it. He says, 'If you don't want to, there's no point.' This was just after Teddy was born. Now he's getting back into this thing of finding himself again. Whatever happened in his mind, he's worked it out. But somehow I'm not there anymore. I'm just not there. He jokes about it. That's the way we cope with it. We joke about it. Makes cracks about it – about our sex life. Sometimes it's okay but more often than not I feel really sort of depressed – I don't know where it comes from. Maybe I'm turning him into my father again. Or, maybe it's just the whole thing, the kids, that frustration – when things aren't going well my sex life is the first thing to go for me. It's the very first thing. We were in Jasper at Thanksgiving and we had a very nice conversation on the way home. The kids fell asleep for most of the trip and Ralph wanted to really talk about our sex life, I think he's concerned about it, and he said, 'Well you know, even though we're tired and miserable we should still try to make love every night or every other night or something, because it's a habit that we're forgetting to do. It's like maybe after we start it'll be fine. Maybe we'll be glad. Maybe once we get back into it, it will improve.' But we've sort of tried it, not every night because I don't wanna, but it has got a little bit better. I just think, 'If I get myself pulled together, have less to think about, less to worry about, and accept the fact that I'm doing what I want to do for the next while, then everything else will kind of fall into place.' I hope so anyway. Because I just don't like this; I don't like being in this situation at all.

Indicative of the strength of Mary's feelings of distress about sacrificing herself for her family, is her reaction to an obituary she read. Her fear of a third unplanned pregnancy and her resentment about her husband's failure to obtain a vasectomy, contribute to her disinterest in sex.

> I was just thinking about an obituary I saw in tonight's paper. There was a woman's picture in the anniversary obit column. And she looked like a mom – she had her hair in tight curls, wearing glasses and this nice smile on her face, and she died, I don't remember how long ago. There was a little poem from her family about what a perfect mother she'd been. I thought, 'Yeah, she probably worked herself into the grave for you guys.' I felt really sorry seeing that picture; it really affected me. See, I don't want to be like that. I want to have something after. I sort of think that maybe I'm laying a little foundation here, little bricks here and there, and slowly I'll be able to pull

> together, if some catastrophe doesn't befall me, like having another kid or health problems or something. Having another kid is a big deal right now because Ralph still hasn't got his vasectomy, although he promised me that he would. That's why I haven't made a move. I went to see a doctor about getting my tubes tied. He put me on the pill. He said, 'We'll call you.' And Ralph said, 'No, I think I'll go.' He still hasn't done it, which is maybe another reason our sex life is not so shit-hot, because I'm pissed off about it. And yet, do we really want to cut it off? We're only 35 and have two kids. All of these questions. I can sense his hesitation because I felt hesitant about going in myself. And yet I don't know if Ralph and I would ever want to start all over again with kids, especially after 35. Who wants to start that whole thing again?

The conflict Mary feels regarding children and career and what this means to her as a woman in our society, is summed up in her answer to the question, "What do you think about the saying: 'It's a man's world?"

> I think it's 80 percent true. Mainly because I think that women either are biologically forced to do something - they have to have the children in the family - or they just decide never to have children. So if they have career ambitions they have to negate a side of themselves to do it. They may not even be the women that have the talent to really do anything. They just have the ability to make that decision. A lot of women go out and work right away. And I think that's true that they do, but it's at a real sacrifice I'm sure, of energy, time, the children, husband. Everything suffers! And men don't have to worry about that. They have wives. I think everybody should have a wife, even a wife. Men can go out; they can say good-bye and catch the bus to the big city and not have to worry about anything but making a living. And this counsellor that I was tallking to said to me many times, 'Well, wouldn't you hate the reponsibility of having to earn a living for a family every day? The poor man is out there every day working his guts out, isn't that enough? Why should he have to come home and worry about that end of the deal? Why can't he come home and find a nice, happy, cheerful wife and family?' That was her theory. And I could never get her past it. I just kind of left her with that theory and went on to other things. But I don't believe it. I think that it's easy for men to go out and be successes if they have support at home, and it's harder for women. That's why I think it is 80 percent true.

At the same time, Mary understands that lack of social support, i.e., lack of day care centers, is central to her conflict. She perceives that women who manage to have both a career and a family need to have money to hire help or family willing to help - without such support women will suffer.

> And it always will be unless there are incredible advances in day care, where you can have a baby and know that you're going to leave it with someone who's trained; that the child won't be stuck in a hallway with three other kids, with somebody watching TV all day. Unless that happens, and I don't see it happening for awhile, women are just going to have to do it themselves or else go out and do it at the expense of their family lives or themselves. There are very few women who get recognition. I think there must be a handful that go out into the world with children behind them. I don't know, I'm just thinking about Joan Smith, the lawyer. She's wealthy enough to hire a full-time nanny to look after her kids. Dorothy has two women looking after her family, and one doing her house, and her cooking and her food and her laundry. That's luck! Three women! So Dorothy will become a success. She couldn't do it otherwise. I thought when I heard she was pregnant, 'Well, too bad! That's the end of a budding career.' So she's lucky! She's very lucky! So I guess that's it - you have to have luck or money to do it.

Faced with the lack of adequate day care, lack of finances and family support, and the impossibility of building a free lance career at home while caring for her children herself, Mary 'chooses' to stay at home. Still, she worries about the model she is providing for her daughter.

> I hate to generalize but maybe the women that go out because they want to add a little income to the family coffers, and take jobs as librarians or secretaries or whatever the world offers them to do for whatever – 800 a month, or less – they probably have to worry about the daycare situation, and their kids are home at 3:30 and there's nobody there. I don't think it's worth it! I really don't! Maybe I'll find out differently later. It's really hard for me to decide actually, because on the one hand I say it's not worth it and on the other hand I say that Sara deserves to have that model. She deserves to have somebody that's out there in the world, out and doing, not home schlepping around, doing the odd biscuit. She deserves to have a better model. I'm going to have to work that one out very soon – find some compromise that makes me happy. Working at home I thought would be it – you know, freelancing at home. After the job I've done on the last book, who would be interested to see if I ever get offered? I've been so late with it. I already told Virginia that I wasn't going to work anymore after this book was done and she didn't seem to be too upset by that. So I don't know.

In spite of the great amount of stress she faces, Mary perseveres. Although her children and husband are the source of much conflict for her, she nevertheless values them, as indicated by her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> Well, that's not so hard. I guess I value my children, my husband and my friends, in that order. Personal relationships. As far as my kids go, well, partly it's trial by fire, you know? After all of this, I'm thankful for them. I've learned a lot about myself and I've grown up a lot. But it wouldn't have been possible without them. And I'm very proud of them. I just love to watch the way these little creatures begin to start thinking and be independent, talk back, scold me, and just assert themselves. They're the hardest thing about my life right now, but they're also the thing that means the most.

Speaking at greater length about her husband, she describes the kind of person he is and the stresses they have faced together. Mary explains what marriage means to her – a special connection with another person, and a struggling and working together for goals in common.

> As far as Ralph is concerned, I just think he's just a great person. He tries so hard. He's the same as me; he wants to do right by everything. He wants to do a good job. I think it's put him through the mill, having two kids. He's just really been turned inside out by it. But somehow he's managed to keep his sense of the possibilities – this whole thing about wanting a fireplace. I mean that's a real gift. There I was – it's the old Mary and Martha story – I was in the kitchen fuming and he was oblivious and still able to focus on the possibility, a nice possibility. While it pisses me off on some level, I can still value that in him, and that's what I think makes him a good homemaker and a good person to know. I think he affects his friends that way too. On the one hand they sort of tease him about his romanticism and on the other hand that's a quality of his that everybody likes. Because it's not easy to be that way, and you put your ass on the line by even saying it to some people. I'm really sorry that I have – I think I have made him unhappy in some ways. Not

> in the dutiful, homebody wife way – I mean it's not that he wanted a homemaker, I'm not saying that. It's that I have not kept my sense of humor. I seem to have lost my ability to laugh at myself somewhere along the line. I haven't kept that, which he has managed to keep. I'm really sorry about that because I think it's made him sad about things, about us. And that would be my goal, in fact, as far as the relationship goes – to try and get back that part of me that I somehow lost fuming over the details of running the ship. We've had a lot of stress for a young couple. We've had a lot. A lot of young couples must have a lot of stress because they move, they have children, they go through periods of lean times, and Ralph and I have had all of that. We've moved twice, had sick parents, unwanted pregnancies and all this. And we sometimes say to ourselves, 'God, if we get through this we'll be thick forever,' because we can objectively sit back and say we have a lot to deal with and we're doing pretty good under the circumstances. He doesn't drink, he doesn't have affairs, he's very ethical. He's that kind of person. I don't know if I trust myself as far as that goes, as much as I trust him. But I'm pretty sure that both Ralph and I believe the same thing about our marriage – that for us it's a connection without which we would not feel completely human. I'm not saying it very well. I think we both need a connection to another person. It doesn't always work out that it's a good connection. Sometimes it's faulty, but we both have a sense of struggling together, of working together for something. And the children give us a reason for that partly. Partly we both have enough ego that we want to do it for ourselves. I don't sense that Ralph is doing his work for me, or I'm doing my work for him. I have no feeling of that at all. It's either for us or because we want to support the structure of our family. When my marriage to George failed and we got a divorce I felt that a part of me had failed – that I had failed in part of my humanness to solve a problem that we both had – that we both failed, it wasn't just me. It was a very urgent problem and we hadn't coped with it very well. We had been too one-sided, or too young or whatever, but we had just not been able to really work on it. And I think for me, I felt that my marriage break-up was a real tragedy; in spite of the fact that I absolutely had to leave, I viewed it as a real tragedy. Because it was years of building on something and then, kaput! And I think when you spend years building on something you should be able to make it hold together. I don't think our problems were that acute. I really admire people that have been married for a long time. When they seem to have it going pretty well, I think that's quite an accomplishment. It means being a success in some ways – in your personal ability to make concessions and make room for the other person.

At the same time, Mary realizes that she is not willing to make all the concessions in her marriage. Her problem, she states, is deciding how much to fight.

> Some of them make concessions and that's all they do, just conceding, conceding, conceding, conceding, and I have enough personality left so that I don't do that. I learned to fight because I think that's one thing the divorce taught me – that I didn't fight. I hadn't fought for myself. I learned to fight, but how much fighting is good? I mean, that's my struggle right now, how much fighting is worth it? I talked to a woman at the nursery school and she was horrified when I said that I had fought with Ralph over some things that I think are important – like him helping me with the kids and helping me with the house. I said I thought it had cost us psychically quite a bit in our relationship. And she said, 'Oh, I would never do that. I have let Ron do anything that he wanted. I have done it all because I think that's what I should do; that's my job.' And then the next statement she said was that they are going their separate ways more or less. He's doing his thing and she's doing her thing. But I'm not like that. So, what's best? Do you fight until you've destroyed it or do you take it until it's fucked? What do you do? I don't think that very many men of our generation are really prepared to be a wife to somebody. They have no idea, they aren't taught to think in terms of what needs doing. Ralph has no idea of what needs doing to keep this house afloat. Otherwise he just couldn't relax as much as he does. Well, maybe he

won't have a heartattack when he's 50.

Mary also mentioned above that she values her friends. She explains that she doesn't make friends easily, and talked about the ones she has – old friends, women friends, men friends.

> And my friends, I have a hard time making friends, I think because I still have that thing from my childhood of being shy and having no confidence. I mean I walk into parties like one at Dorothy's and I just want to hide. There were all these neat women and they're out there looking fabulous, singing and joining right in and they haven't known those people any longer than I have. And there am I – I just can't do it; I still can't do it. My friendships are very slowly evolved things. I don't make friends easily and I'm discovering that I will not let them go easily either because I've had a lot of good friendships in my life and now I can't pick up traces of people who I'd like to keep in touch with. It's just lost. I phoned Harry and Linda. He married one of my college roomates, George's old buddy, and I phoned him one night because I hadn't heard from them since, oh, God knows when. It was years and years. And I called them out of the blue one night and we just had a wonderful talk. We all ended up saying, 'I love you, I love you.' All three of us. And I just thought, 'Shit, I mustn't ever, ever let go of that.' Because we hadn't seen each other for years and yet you still have feelings for people. I would say here in Edmonton that's the thing that has struck me the most about this place, is the friendships that people have, that are so deep and go back for so many years. This is a city of people who grew up together and have 10 years, if not longer, friendships. If we move to Montreal or something I think I would just be wrenched. It would take me years to start feeling the same way about people as I do here. And yet I don't consider that I am a very good friend to other people. I don't consider that I'm the kind of person that pops to mind when you think of the epitome of friendship, because I don't seem to have time to do things with people. The energy is just not there at the time, or whatever it is. For a long time I was friendly with Virginia. Then I went through this thing of not liking her, not trusting her for some reason, and then slowly I've just sort of let that whole friendship just come out of its own. If we were going to be friends, I was going to have to be the kind of person, and she was going to have to be the kind of person that I could talk with and be friendly with. She would have to demonstrate it to me over a period of time and vice-versa. That's how I handled that one. I think she is a very fine person. I think she likes to intrigue and she has her bad points; but you know, I used to think that people should be perfect. I wouldn't like them if they weren't perfect because I guess I must have thought that I was so great. And now I just find I don't care. Okay, so she's that way, but that's not what I'm going to pay attention to. What else can I say about that? I guess there's not much else. I have some really close friends that are men, that I didn't think I'd ever be able to have. I didn't think I'd ever be able to separate out the social side of it shall we say, from the just plain ordinary side of friendship. I think I'm that way with George – a totally non-sexual friendship. But we sure had to go through hell to arrive at that point. And I don't dare see him very much because I think it might upset Ralph a bit. He gets a little threatened by it. Who else is a friend of mine? Richard. Sometimes he and I just sit on the phone and talk our hearts out for an hour. We haven't done that in a long time. Ever since his girl friend moved in with him. I like to talk to men as a friend. It's not always that happens. It's not easy for me; I'm always waiting for the crunch.

Asked what her friends mean to her, Mary talked about being in contact instead of being isolated, and about having support when she needed it from people who could help and care in place of her family who was too far away.

> I think friendship means for me, not to be isolated. It's been especially important for me since I was home with the children, to have that feeling of being in contact with people. In fact those friendships have really saved my life in some ways over the time I've had kids. It gives me a feeling of having accomplished something over the years, to have friendships. And it gives me a good feeling to be able to say, go to Elaine's store and be able to talk to Elaine, or go to university and take classes with Jim and know him as a friend. I guess it validates me in a way, as being a person. That you exist, you've been around, people know you, they like you, they've liked you for 10 years, you've been through things with them. Some friendships don't work out. You finally discover they like things that you don't like, husbands you can't live with. But they're very meaningful to me in the sense that I would feel utterly bereft without them. My mother and I used to talk about friends a lot because she doesn't have any close friends. She had a couple of college friends that kind of fizzled out. I sure learned the meaning of friendship when I was breaking up with George because I needed my friends then, and I used them as much as I possibly could, and they were really supportive and helpful to both of us. She couldn't understand how I could talk to strangers and not talk to family. She doesn't understand that – for her blood is all, and for me blood is fine but blood is 2000 miles away. I mean I can talk to my sister the way I'm talking to you but I can't see her everyday. It's not possible. So for me, friends have taken the place of the family in some sense, because I have been so far from them since I was in my adult life. When I think about that I get very clutchy, because I would really love to be closer to them. It's a great sadness to me that I'm not. Friends are like family.

Mary also talks about an ideal relationship she envisages – a kind of mentor who could be a model, who could advise her, and who could offer support and wisdom.

> I wonder, I was talking to Virginia about it the other night, this whole idea of having an older person like a mentor – her's was a favorite professor. That must help. I don't think I ever had one. I never met anybody that filled that need for me, and I wonder if that would have made a difference to my ability to see that you shouldn't follow George to Michigan, you shouldn't insist on marriage, you shouldn't remarry so soon. 'Look what you're doing!' Some mother to guide you. Because it seems to me a wonderful idea – it's like having a fairy godmother or something. Someone to say maybe, 'You're not so bad, your struggles aren't so horrific, your mistakes aren't so great, you're okay.' I don't know what I mean by mentor exactly. I mean it seems to have been important for a lot of people though.

In spite of all her difficulties, Mary feels positive about what she has accomplished and about her goals.

> I feel good about myself now. I think that on the whole, I'm not unhappy with the way I've turned out. Because I have some goals, I have some talents, I've done a few things, I've had two kids, I've botched up one marriage but I learned a lot from it and I've come out of it with feelings of friendship for the other party. I'm trying to be realistic about this one and solve the problems the best way I know how so that it does work. I don't think I'm feeling too badly about myself at this point.

Asked, "What do you value in yourself?" she spoke of her ability to cope with problems, her sense of humor, her ability to be reflective about her life, and the talents she is discovering she has.

I think I would have to say that now, today, tonight, I value my ability to roll with the punches. Because I've really been working hard to develop that. I think that I didn't have a very large capacity for coping with stress or for coping with things that just didn't go right. When things didn't go according to the way I had imagined them – little things, big things, medium size things, anything – I couldn't cope. And now I think I do a lot better in that area. I don't make tremendous, firm, fixed plans about my daily life. And if something happens I just say, 'Fine, okay, maybe next time,' or 'Too bad!' I mean I don't mind; I don't moan and groan about things when they don't work out. I also have discovered that I have a good ability to cope with situations that are a hassle. I didn't used to, but I do now. I think life has just been a hassle for such a long time that it has just become easier because that's the way life is. You just sort of get used to it. I was quite precious. I couldn't cope with noise, I couldn't cope with messes, I couldn't cope with unexpected things, like the kid shitting on your rug just before you're going to serve dinner. I just plod through those things now and that's a good ability. I don't think that's a bad thing to have in life.

I value my sense of humour, God bless it, I hope I can hang onto it. Actually that is my criteria for a friend, practically anyone. Well number one is that they're smart, reasonably smart, not smarter than me, and two is that they have a good sense of humour. Because I can't talk to people that can't laugh, I just can't. If a person doesn't laugh about whatever, if they take themselves and life too seriously, I don't need it. I just don't want to be around them; I find them boring. And all of my friends that I've had for years and years are people I can laugh with. Because that's what seems to keep me going – laughing. Even about the blackest things – making jokes about bashing the kids heads against the walls. That's funny! I think that's great and if you can laugh about it, you won't do it maybe. I've gone through a lot of my early stage problems with Ralph with a sense of humour. I'm discovering that we can both do that. It takes a lot of the tension out of our relationship if he can make jokes about my going through a period of celibacy and I can make jokes about his armpits. It's tit for tat and that's how we get through it. Sense of humour is an important value in my life.

And I think there's a certain bit in my brain that allows me to be reflective about myself. I value that, because I can sometimes say, 'Whoa, stop and think what you're doing, or what's about to happen.' Which I didn't have. That's something that came later, much later for me. I think I developed that through therapy. Before I just did things without really thinking about them – I just drifted. Yeah, I guess I have a certain strength. I've discovered that I have certain strengths and God damn it, I wish I'd known about them 10 years ago. That I do have strengths that I could have done things more independently. That I didn't fall apart as I'd feared I would and that I do have talents in certain areas. Like my artwork. I can do that. I can cook. If I want to I can set out a good dinner. Things that I like doing. I like cooking, I like painting, I like though I'm not very good at sewing. But my taking classes this fall has shown me that I do have talents that I should work on. That kind of thing. It's nice to find out that one has a talent because I didn't think I did for a long time.

Mary explains further that she used to see herself as a failure. She describes the effect on her of a particular professor's judgment that she was irresponsible.

I didn't think I was good at anything; I've been such a failure academically. I had done a Library Science degree and hadn't really done much with it. I had started off with a bang editing and then it sort of fizzled out. I just didn't think there was much. One of my Ed. Psych. professors made a devastating comment about me because I was a miserable failure in my Education courses. My student teaching was going along fairly well when I got an absolutely horrible report from my supervising teacher, that I wasn't well prepared, this, that and the other. She gave me a bad mark. And I was crushed because I thought I was working as hard as I could for that certificate. And the Ed. Psych. professor called me into his room one day

> and told me that my report was very bad, that one of the things that they had to say about me was that I was irresponsible. And that has haunted me for all these years, that word *irresponsible*. I have struggled to prove that I am responsible. And that stupid bastard, I mean I just wasn't interested in it, and nobody had the insight to say, 'Well maybe you're just not interested in teaching. Have you thought about getting out of it?' No, I was irresponsible! And that was something lapse. Oh my God, the guilt! Like lapsing a bill, or that job – that's why that is such a heavy burden on my head right now. I feel irresponsible for that. Anyway, I guess that's all I can say about that one.

Mary still feels that she is to blame – that she is irresponsible – when she hasn't the time and energy to take care of all the household jobs. In spite of her recognition that there are stressful aspects to her life quite apart from herself, she tends to blame herself for her feelings of dissatisfaction. In answer to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?", she replied.

> Being irresponsible. I procrastinate. I sit around, well I don't sit around but I put things off that if I got done when they came up, wouldn't bother me. I'd just get it over with and it wouldn't bother me for days and days before I did it. I don't like the way I'm coping with my relationship with Ralph right now. I consider it terrible that I somehow can't smile through the whole thing. There's a sense of grace – I don't think I have a good sense of grace, that's part of it. I'm just always complaining about things – this needs to be done, that needs to be done. I don't like that real, real sourpuss side of my nature. I just hate it. And the sense of dissatisfaction with my life, I don't like that. George used to call me a malcontent and maybe he's right. There's some part of me that is never content, is always wanting something to be better, wanting things to be better. And maybe that's the bill of goods that girls are sold. I still vie for that one. I want the house finished. I can't stand living in this sort of mess, with things not painted, things not finished, that sense that nothing is going right, everything's wrong. I think, 'Other people have their houses in order, their lives in order. Why can't we?' Instead of just saying, 'Well, not everybody has their lives in order. We're among them; we've got a lot to do.' I mean I don't have that easiness. Superficially I do go along with things as they happen but all the same, inside it bugs me. I try to keep a smooth surface because I know that if you don't, it affects the kids and everything goes to shit. But all the same, it really bothers me. I yearn for order – orderliness and quiet, things finished, everything done. Death, maybe I have to wait for that. It sounds like death doesn't it? The grave! Flowers in the bowl.
>
> Oh, there are lots of little things people don't like about theirselves – that / don't like about myself. I don't like the fact that I've let myself go physically. I haven't picked that side up at all. I'm still sagging. My body is not what it used to be in its heyday, and I just don't seem to care. I mean if I cared I would just get up there and do my 40 sit–ups every night. But I don't do it. There are certain ways I do look after myself as a matter of pride, but I don't like that that I've let myself go. And I'm extravagant. I have a spendthrift side to myself. If I'm not careful I'll spend money like crazy. And those are sort of picky little things.

Until the interview, Mary had not realized that having to cope with a multitude of stresses makes her feel powerless or helpless. Asked, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?" she was at first baffled. Then she recalled the helpless feeling she experienced being in labor the first time.

> Gee I don't know. That's an interesting question because I sometimes don't think that I am powerless; I think that I have a lot of abilities to fall back on. I know – labor! 18 hour labor! Sort of like being inside a giant snowball that's rolling down a hill. You know it will stop sooner or later but you're not sure how bad it will be before it gets to the bottom. I was unprepared for the pain and the power of that pain, to use the word again, and I knew that it would stop. I mean I became very much an animal in that I had a very long period of what they call transition, because I wasn't dilating fast enough and I was told not to push. This went on for a long, long time, I don't remember the hours. Ralph probably remembers the details better than I do because I was really in extremis. All I could think was that it would end – that there would be a time when it would stop. But there was nothing I could do. I was kind of swept along by these contractions and I was helpless. Totally helpless! Except that I was trying to control the pushing. And that was almost helpless too. I was almost helpless in that. Well, you know.

Mary also thinks of herself as powerless to effect political events. She reflected that this feeling might come from being wrapped up in her own personal life, as well as from a sense that as one small clog, she cannot affect the big political machine.

> Aside from my personal life, powerlessness, I don't feel I have any power really as a citizen. Maybe that comes from being an American in a Canadian environment, or from just being, from reacting to things that happen in the world – political events, you know, invasions, wars, disasters, human disaster. A lot of people give their lives to political action and in thinking they will improve the situations that they want to work on, and I somehow feel that I don't have the energy for it, or the inclination. There are people that do go in there and give it all and have it all to give and do it. Like early feminists and some politicians. Some people have changed things, but I don't feel that I have any power in that regard. I'm a small cog. I don't know, maybe it comes with maturity, because sometimes I think that people that devote their lives to a cause are fairly highly developed people in some ways. They're not so wrapped up in the details of their daily life. And once a person reaches that, the goal of having a certain amount of control over one's life, one's job, one's marriage, one's family, then maybe you can move to a higher plane sort of, trying to improve the greater – your community or city or your country or the world. But I just don't feel that I'm there I guess, because I don't do anything. I don't support charities, I don't politic, I don't picket, I don't attend meetings. I don't even vote. Political elections leave me deadly cold. I just don't feel that there's anything to gain by it. Especially the last couple of elections. I still see myself as an American, politically. I relate to the American elections a lot more than I do to anything that goes on here politically. I've been here for 10 years, which is kind of weird, because some people have become citizens. They participate and I don't. I sort of watch what goes on down there in a detached sort of horrific state most of the time. Whoever becomes president, to me it's almost immaterial. Probably both candidates are very much alike basically, except they have different images that they promote. And once they're in office, the machine takes over. I think that's really true. There's very little they can do. Who knows who controls anything? I don't know who is powerful. I guess my definition of a powerful person would be someone who really had the ability to go out and change and do things and not with a gun and not with a car – through their personality, with their work and effort. Doing something!

Mary explains too that she feels powerless to effect change in her own home, and that she perceives this feeling as related to the reality of the amount of care demanded by small children.

> I would say on the whole though that I felt more powerless than powerful. Even looking around my house I think that. It's not pulled together, and that to me is a sign of powerlessness in some way, because it means that I don't quite think I can do it or our house is really half-done. We sort of stopped doing it. Having the two kids made both of us feel powerless – caught in a bind. And for a long time we wallowed in it; we just couldn't do anything. I think looking back on it, especially Ralph, he's a much more optimistic person than me – I think basically my nature is a pessimistic one, his is optomistic – he's always trying to show me the ways in which we have done and accomplished and succeeded. Whereas it's my tendency to see the ways in which we have yet to do and have failed. So he drags me out. We're kind of a balance because when he gets too flighty about, 'Oh, wouldn't it be great if we did X,' then I come in with my pessisism and dash his hopes to the ground. And when I'm crawling around on the floor he kind of lifts me up by the collar a little bit. But I think we went through a real powerlessness state, a feeling of powerlessness after Sara was born – well, when I got pregnant with Sara, the whole pregnancy, and for a while after her birth. She's in her terrible two's but we still feel that we have power over her and that's a good feeling. It's not quite as much work as when I was nursing her several times a day and having to worry about Teddy at the same time. I caught every cold that came around. I was sick once a month. I think my neighbor's going through the same thing right now. It just breaks my heart to see her. The same damn thing that I went through! She's sick! Her baby cries all night and is every bit as spoiled and as demanding as Teddy was. I know just what she's going through. Powerlessness! I never really thought about it before tonight, but maybe that's something that I should think about and try to worry about a little bit more. Because it certainly is a key to how much you get done, isn't it? I think how you feel about yourself, whether you think you have any power or control over your life. I do get little things done but they just sort of sink into the larger morass of the place. I don't know. Sometimes I think we should sell the house and start over with a clean, new place that had all the work done. But I think Ralph and I both shared that feeling at the beginning, of just being overwhelmed by it all – not being able to move. We had our feet in the mud. And yet we were *doing* that whole time. I mean Christ, he was working, I was keeping the house, cooking the meals, looking after the two children. We were really working our butts off though it seemed at the time that we were swept up. I was editing a book. I even took it with me to the hospital, thinking that I could get some work done there. On the whole I feel that we haven't done too badly, although I think there's room for improvement. It would do our heads a lot of good if we felt we had more power.

Mary has perceived that both she and her husband have felt powerless, faced with the amount of work required to care for two infants. She recognizes, however, that while her husband may, like her, feel powerless at home, he does have power in the world outside.

> I don't know what Ralph's opinion of himself is because obviously he's out in the world doing things and getting recognition for what he does right and left. I remember I was doing the watercolour workshop in the fall with an old, old friend of mine. I've known her for 10 years. She was with me and we were talking about husbands and we were very close really. And she was giving me hell in some ways about Ralph because she doesn't think that Ralph and I talk to each other enough. And she said, 'You know Ralph is a very powerful person.' And I said, 'What do you mean? Ralph?' She said, 'Yeah. In his profession he is a very powerful man in Alberta. And you'd better smarten up and realize that he's not Joe Shit, the ragman on the street. He's a special person!' Maybe she was trying to say to me that I wasn't valuing him enough. She certainly wasn't saying I should kowtow, she's not that kind of woman, and she works and everything. She wasn't suggesting that I should

> be the little fascinating woman at home. She was just saying, 'Look at him; value him; try to see him the way other people see him and maybe you'll realize a different side of Ralph, because you tend to see the negative. You've been bogged down for so long together in this struggle that you don't see the positive side of him and you don't start by looking at his successes in his job.' And because I don't, I never think about Ralph as powerful outside the house, because inside the house he's a schlepp. He doesn't help me with the dishes, he helps me with this but breaks it. It's just criticism, criticism, criticism! But I do think that he does have it outside the home; he does have a powerful image. And when he comes home maybe it's schizophrenic for him. Maybe the guy comes home and all of a sudden he's a little nothing. I don't think that's true. I think Ralph is too much of a family person to think that. But it was an interesting realization for me.

Mary experiences power too, but only in her relationships to others – her power to hurt or to make happy. However, this is not a matter of great importance to her.

> But power in my later years, well, I'm a lot more careful now with my relationships with friends and my husband, and I try to be more responsible because I realize that I do have the power to hurt people and the power to make people happy. It's something that I really have to struggle with because I don't think I'm a really super conscious person of other peoples' feelings. I'm ususally bogged down by what I am having to go through at the time and it takes a lot for me to notice that somebody else looks sad or unhappy or happy or whatever. I used to be accused of being tactless and that was a very heavy thing for me because I thought I was so wonderful in that way. But now I'm careful, I'm careful about the way I relate to other people. I try to be a little more considerate in that sense. That power that I have, I don't feel that it's anyone and anybody else's power. But I do think that I've learned that I have the ability to use whatever powers I do have to hurt people or to make people happy. Certainly with my kids that's the really big thing right now, because one has power of life and death over children. And not to be so extreme, but you have the power to affect their personalities and their development. I don't dwell on that too much. I just think that they're resilient and they'll get through it no matter how awful a mother I am in some ways, and I'm not too bad. I don't dwell on that. I'm not scared of dealing with them. I'm aware of that potential for hurt and the potential for good. I think that's about it on that one.

The conflict and depression Mary experiences seems related to a feeling of powerlessness to make changes, both in her personal life and in the world at large. Her sense of not being able to cope with responsibilities she has undertaken, of being caught in a difficult situation, has left her without the energy she needs to help herself, either by questioning social norms and values or by actively changing her situation.

> As for me, I think I'm sort of stripped of the ability to do anything. Inactive, I think that's it. I stir myself once in awhile and I go do a batch of baking and then I am so far behind with everything else that once in a while I'm into the quicksand. I go out in the world and I try to take on a job and it becomes a hassle. And so I'm swept back into that. Plus it becomes a hassle outside because it's a lot of work and inside the house because it's triple the effort at home. So I don't do anything. I think today, with the shooting of John Lennon, you really do feel powerless. There's nothing that anybody can do. He's dead, gone, kaput! And I kind of schlepped around the house all day and I was really nice to the kids, for a change. I was up really late last night, I read to them all morning and I just couldn't seem to get motivated. I made a few phone calls, I baked some biscuits, but did none of the big jobs around the house. I tried to do the sidewalks, just little things that don't amount to

> much over a day. You wouldn't walk into my house and say, 'Oh, she did her floors' or 'Oh, she did the laundry,' or anything. I think maybe that's why I'm being so slack with the executive work. I just feel, 'Oh, what the hell! I can't do it anyway! It's too much!' I think they should hire a person that doesn't have kids. They should hire somebody who could just sit at her desk and work, and do a good job. And sometimes I just think I'm not interested in too many things. Maybe the things I'm interested in are schlepping around the house, reading to my kids, and baking a batch of biscuits. I don't know. I guess that's it. I like to call it *tharn* – you know, that expression from *Watership Down* that the little rabbits had for when they saw the headlights of a car coming at them and couldn't move? And that was it, tharn. They'd just sort of stand and wait.

And yet, as immobilized as she feels, caught in a situation not entirely of her own making, Mary has made significant changes on a personal level. In answer to the question, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?" she reaffirms the change in her behaviour towards women, in her values and in her thinking. This she has achieved in spite of the restrictions she experiences on her time and energy.

> I have done zippo for the Women's Movement, in complete character with my treatment of the rest of the world movements and causes. I have done nothing. I try to make the odd statement when I'm dealing with somebody in a conversation, person to person. If somebody says something that I think is really blatantly stupid about women, and especially if it's a woman, then I try to talk about it. And I try to support my friends when I think they need it. I have a friend now that's home with a little baby and we see a lot of each other because I know what it meant to me when I was starting out. I'm not competitive anymore with women because I view it as a waste of time. In the days in college we were competing for dates. You were on the meat market – out on the hustle, when it seemed so important to get a man. I think that's why I didn't have any close female friends, not really. It's really hard to. And now it's all different. My values have changed. I'm not interested in the same kinds of things. If I could have a good conversation with a woman or a man, that's fine with me. I'm not competitive. If a woman has success with something, great, I'm happy, I'll try to support her if I can. Beauty in another person doesn't threaten me, or personality, or money. I don't think I'm threatened by those things. You know what does threaten me is a successful woman – a woman that's out in the world, making a big financial and professional success. And I didn't realize I was until last week when Ralph said he'd had supper with a particular woman. She used to be around here in some capacity or other. And she's now some big shot, big, big, big, big shot with CBC. And immediately I thought, 'Gasp! He's out having dinner at some classy hotel with this beautiful – she's beautiful – blond, career woman.' And I didn't realize how that would affect me, but it did.
>
> But getting back to the question about the Feminist Movement. Oh God, I don't know. I think I'm trying to find somewhat of a happy medium for myself within it, trying to balance the fact that I do have an urge to get out and do something, with the feeling that I must look after the home fires too. But at least, maybe because of the Feminist Movement, I'm even asking that, whereas maybe 10 years ago I wouldn't have even asked that. I would have just assumed that I had to do that and I wouldn't be struggling to find an answer. I really respect a lot of women that are still actively marching and doing things, keeping it in the forefront of their lives. Like Vera and you and Virginia, people like that. I sort of watch and think, 'Great! Good! I'm glad somebody's doing it!' I've lost a lot of that. Since I got married to Ralph and had a family, a lot of my ties with the women that I used to see more of in those days have loosened. And I guess that's natural. Well in fact, some of them have moved away. And I simply don't have time to go out and do things with them on an independent thing. I'm just beginning to start, as a matter of

fact, to go out. And Ralph encourages me. He's not threatened by that, I don't think, too much.

H. Jean

Jean is a 34 year old woman, born in rural Saskatchewan of English, Irish and Scottish heritage. She has lived in several different Canadian cities and presently resides in Edmonton. Jean was the third child and only daughter in a family of five children. Her mother has a grade 11 education and is a licensed practical nurse and first aid attendant. Her father, who died 11 years ago was variously a mechanic, electrician, carpenter and farmer. Jean has two university degrees plus technical training in communication arts. She has worked at numerous jobs including: machine operator and collection clerk in a bank, library clerk, teacher, researcher and writer, sound recordist and editorial assistant. At present she works in the radio, making a yearly salary of $22,500. Jean is a member of a conservation group.

Asked, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" Jean first spoke of the discomfort and mood change she experiences when menstruating.

> One of the things it has meant is that I have about 13 periods a year instead of eleven like some people have, and I have one right at this very second and it feels like it always feels. Like I feel crummy! I feel like until I get over this I'm not going to be able to think straight, I'm not going to be able to do anything. And if I didn't have this my mind would work all the time. I often resent the fact that I have quite a lot of mood change and particularly the week before. Not usually after the period starts, but the week before I can be completely miserable, cry a lot, not know what's the matter and it always comes as a suprise to me when I have my period and then I think, 'Oh!' But it's unfair! I once knew a girl, she had to have been a *girl*, who said to me many years ago, 'Oh, I just love it when I get my period because it makes me remember that I'm a woman.' And I thought, 'Jesus, I'd just as soon have some other way to get reminded.' I mean, it's just not a good enough reason. But actually it's not that I can't think about anything else, it's just that as long as there's any kind of basic discomfort, any kind of awareness of your body – if you're hungry or you're tired or whatever – you feel crumby. That always comes first before whatever, and what you're working on tends to kind of get filtered through that. You're not free of your body when you're trying to use your mind. I tend to divide the body and mind quite a lot more than they say one is supposed to, and I actually resent the intrusion of the body when I am trying to use my brain. That of course is a personal thing and always has been.

Jean went on to discuss her body-image, explaining that she is self-conscious about being overweight. She believes that being anything other than average or other than she *should be* has been a disadvantage to her in the working world.

> I have never liked my body at all, and when I dream I dream that I look different. I have never accepted the way I look, and consequently I tend to discount it as much as possible – my body – and assume that the mind is where it's at. What's going on is in there. It has nothing to do with what's carrying it around. It comes from being fat. It comes from having been fat since birth and being aware that I didn't look like everybody else. And that it was a disadvantage not to look like everbody else. I mean a real, true

> disadvantage from the rest of the world. And in fact, it's always been much more important to me that I'm fat than that I'm a woman. I've never felt really that I was disadvantaged because I was a woman, any more than any other woman has, and probably not nearly as much. But I really have always felt that I was disadvantaged because I was fat. Because I think that people make assumptions about you based on what you look like. And it's really subjective, but I've always felt that I looked stupid. That I didn't look – that people wouldn't respect me because I was, you know? I looked, well, on good days I look cute, and on bad days I just look dumpy. And I think that people can't see past that. They can't see that really I'm bright and that I'm talented and whatever, and that that's more important. And consequently I've let the body, which I've never accepted, become too important. And I think it's crippling, really. And I think that any woman – any person really because I know men who have this too, but it's much rarer with them because they never think that they're being judged by their bodies. They always think they're being judged by their achievements. Whereas women are being judged by their bodies all the time and by their achievements secondly. You know, if there's nothing else going on. If you're going to be a woman and deal with the very real disadvantages of being a woman in the marketplace, it helps to be attractive or at least average looking. And being fat takes you out of the average–looking category, I figure. I mean being spectacularly beautiful isn't particularly helpful either, in the working world. I mean it has its other advantages, but it isn't really an advantage in the working world. Actually for a woman to be as invisible as possible or to be at least kind of as standard as possible is a real advantage, because then people judge her by her achievements and by her mind and not by the other stuff.

Jean is not sure of whether or not she has actually experienced discrimination based on her appearance, but believes that she learned at an early age that she was not acceptable the way she was.

> I don't know if I've actually experienced this . I think maybe I've imagined it. It's come from a lifetime of feeling that I was inadequate because I didn't look like everybody else. I mean *truely* feeling that I'm not quite okay, I'm not quite acceptable. I must have picked it up fairly young, because I remember being aware that I was fat and therefore sometimes a second class citizen, at an extremely young age. And it wasn't my family, and who knows what happens before you're four and don't remember anything. But my family has always been really close, so they would never – I know families that are quite vindictive about the way their children are and they tease, they actually tease their children. But that never happened in my family. I think it had to be other kids basically. I don't remember a lot of teasing and that kind of thing when I was very young, but I know it happened. It has always kind of mystified me because I had to have gotten the attitude from somewhere, and I literally don't know where I got it from. Because I remember being quite young and developing the conviction that I couldn't have white stockings to wear to Sunday School. I had to wear ugly brown stockings to Sunday School because my legs were too fat to wear white stockings. And as far as I can tell I invented that because no one ever said that to me. When I was about 15 I said something to my mother and she said, 'That wasn't the truth! You were too old for white stockings!' But I had thought up that as the reason. I tended to not talk about things. I tended to kind of think of what I figured the reason had to be. And then I would believe it after I thought of it. People didn't actually have to tell me anything. I figured it out for myself and I was often wrong. But by the time – like 10 years later – I find out I was wrong, it would be too late to eradicate it. I must have at some point been aware of the fact that I didn't look like the other kids and that it mattered. But I don't know when or where. Because it had to be really young, and then it just got built on for years and years.

As a young child Jean was timid, withdrawn and fearful. She describes several incidents which exemplify the feelings she experienced away from home.

> I was really a timid child anyway. You know, I was the kind of kid that ran away to home when I was staying over at people's places. We had quite an isolated life on the farm, and the family itself was quite close. And being in other people's families, even for the weekend, being constantly afraid of doing something wrong and meeting their standard. I remember staying at an aunt's house and she was very critical in certain ways that my mother wasn't, and I was just frightened the whole time that I was going to do something and be mortified. I mean *mortified*! Humiliation was and is much more to me than any other kind of pain. It's the thing that I cannot bear and that I'll do anything to prevent, often causing myself much more trouble that the humiliation would be if indeed it happened, which it probably wouldn't have. So that has nothing to do with being a woman, that has to do with my character. It had nothing to do with being a girl. I had many characteristics in common with several of my brothers and it had to do with the way we were and not so much with being a girl.
>
> When I was at home I was alone from about the time I was 10, they say. They say I became really withdrawn by the time I was 10, though I can't have been all that communicative till then, you know, when I think of things that I imagined rather than talked about. My mother even said as a baby that I didn't talk. I could talk in full sentences before I actually said anything. I didn't tend to babble. But that I didn't talk, I just thought. And then I was a very sober baby. And my oldest brother was the same, a very sober baby. And she used to worry about us because we were obviously thinking about stuff but she never knew what it was. And I think that in a way I kind of intimidated her.
>
> I was in the hospital when I was six and I had never been away from home. I was in the hospital for three weeks. And somehow they managed to come and see me once a day every day, except for one day. I don't know how they did it. I mean we were 14 miles from town over rough roads, but they actually managed to do it somehow. And I've never been so frightened in my life. I was like lost. First I was in with the babies; there was no place for a six year old girl. First I was in with the babies and then I was in with the adults, and there was never anybody to talk to. I didn't talk to anybody, ever! I was in a lot of pain as well. I had been sick for much of the year and then eventually I ended up in the hospital. I had a hard enough time talking to anybody at home, but in the hospital I couldn't talk to anybody. And I remember after I had been in there about two weeks they took the traction off and let me walk around for a day. And the idea was if I could walk properly then they would let me go home. And I remember being in a lot of pain and trying really hard to walk straight so they would let me go home. And I thought I was actually fooling them and I remember being so bitterly, bitterly disappointed when I discovered that they didn't think I walked so good and they put me back in the traction. So it was just awful, because I'd never been away from home.
>
> I really was the kind of the kid who ran away to home when being sent to my aunt's house to stay for the week. I was sort of good for about two days, I think. And on another occasion I went to stay with some cousins. I have a cousin that's only a few days younger than I am and we've always been kind of close, for people that lived 500 miles apart. And I went to stay with her. She was all right – she stayed the first half of the summer with us and she was fine. She just became a member of our family and she was okay. And for the second half of the summer I went to stay with them. And I was okay for awhile, but I got terrible crying fits. I remember at one point I couldn't remember what my mother looked like. And how was it possible to forget what she looked like? I'd only been away for three weeks, although it seemed like several years. It was just terrible! And I think that eventually my aunt phoned and asked them to come and get me because I was so unhappy. And somewhere in there I ran away too. I had a big fight with my cousin and

> I packed my bags and I was crying and was going out to the end of the lane. And I didn't know which way to turn at the end of the lane and I was 500 miles from home, and I actually didn't know which direction home was, but I was going anyway! God, it must have been terrible! I was so homesick.

Jean describes her family – the fact of having four brothers and no sisters, a mother who went out to work and a father who was very shy and preferred the company of women. She explains her feelings about her family and about feeling different from other families, wondering why, after having lived in a nice, non-sexist family, she is unstable and "screwed up."

> I come from a family of all boys – four boys. And in some ways it was really a good way to grow up – at least I felt so at the time, after I was too old to have a sister. Because there was no competition on that level. I always felt quite outnumbered. There was mother and I and then there was four brothers and my father. And I always felt really outnumbered. And my mother was never a very 'feminine' woman anyway. My father was a gentle soul. He really was. In fact we did well in that way because mother was much stronger and more masculine than the average woman, and worked with him on the farm as a partner. And he was more feminine than the average man. He was fabulous with babies. He really was. And he was wonderful around the house. So I grew up in a pretty non-sexist household, considering how many men there were. But I was always aware of the difference between it and the other households, not so much when I was really young but afterwards. Eventually, mother went to work when my youngest brother was five or six and we had by that time moved off the farm into a tiny hamlet – one of those hamlets where you have to be there 10 to 20 years and you're still the new people. And we were never accepted. Never! Well, I have a brother who has now married there and has children, and they've kind of become accepted, but we as a family never were. My mother worked. She was probably the only woman in the entire village that worked. Oddly enough, the women of the village loved Dad. He was a service man and he went around and fixed their stoves and so on and he had a lot of friends among the women in the community. He was easy to talk to and he was very shy and always more comfortable with women, I guess because they were not as judgmental. Although he got along very well with men, he just was really shy. He didn't like to travel; he didn't like the public. Just one to one over the kitchen table, and he was just fine. And I have a lot of that. I had to fight that, being that shy always.
>
> My own immediate family wasn't exactly like other people's families. I've always felt that my family was slightly unlike other families, mostly because of my parents, not so much because of my brothers, who were pretty regular. But because my mother was a very masculine kind of woman – she considered herself masculine. She grew up in house full of men, she always had men around her, and she was a very straight person and quite cool. She's not demonstrative at all. It isn't that she would choose to be like that. That's the way she is because she grew up in an undemonstrative household, and she can't make herself after all of these years. She has strong feelings – she laughs and cries – but she's not a hugger, my mother. But my father always was. Well, within the bounds of fatherdom, you know. He was by nature a warmer person than her and than the average man, easy. So it's hard to – I always kind of differentiated between the way my family viewed people, viewed us, and the rest of the world viewed people. Because they just weren't like everyone else. It kind of gave me a head start on the Women's Movement, I think. Although who knows, I've never understood how anybody who had such a nice family could turn out as screwed up as I am. It seems not right somehow. It would seem that I should be stable, but I'm not. But then neither were any of the rest of them. My mother always maintained she had the best of a bad bunch. Some of my father's brothers were quite

screwy. And difficult, you know? Moody.

As Jean continues to speak of her family, it becomes evident that her entire family underwent numerous stressful experiences. Isolation on the farm seems to have affected everyone. Her mother's poor health (exhausted by continual pregnancies, three miscarriages, five children to care for and a farm to manage) undoubtedly affected her ability to provide emotional nurturance to her children. This probably affected Jean's sense of security, as it did her brothers'.

> And we were really isolated. I mean we never saw anybody. We moved to that farm when I was a year and a half old. Before that we had lived with mother's father and brothers and hired men and all of those guys, and my father was still in the Air Force. He was in the Air Force up until before I was born, and she was just kind of there with these babies and looking after the farm and pretty disgruntled basically. And she had two in diapers at the same time and Lyle had colic and she just had a terrible time. She had a terrible time all of the time we were young. I don't know how she managed to survive it. And she didn't really kind of come into her own – basically my mother had a terrible time! Because she had all that sickness and all of those children and all of that isolation.
> And for me it was tied up with fear. Yeah, fear! Right! And where did I get it from? I don't know. It seems to have always been there. The later incidents only reinforced it. I think that part of it – it's hard to say, but when we were little and my mother was – my mother had quite a lot of children in a very short period, and she also had two miscarriages, one which was between me and Harry, I think. So she could possibly have had five children in six years. And it just wore her out. She was terribly sick. She can hardly remember our childhood. She was just sick all the time. She was toxic with Harry and she was exhausted. She'd be snow bound there for months on end in the winter, with nothing but kids around her. And dad was great, but you know your universe is only this big and that's really hard. She thinks that she was actually mentally ill for some of those years. She said she was just numb. She just couldn't. She can't remember anything. And I think that having my mother absent, like in spirit, all of those years can't have been very easy for us. And it's one of the reasons why we all – and it's true we were kind of clingers as it was. Mother said that whenever she and dad went out, which was very rarely, whenever they went out we'd be all sort of clustered around underneath a chair, and she said William wouldn't even go to sleep. Lyle and I would eventually go to sleep, although we never really trusted them not to abandon us. But William would stay awake and he would sit under the chair and hang onto her leg.

Jean's father's illness also had a profound effect on her family. She mentions their growing insecurity and their fear of him dying, and the consequences they suffered when he could not work – poverty and the responsibility for running the farm.

> And then my father got sick. And then she had all that fear of losing him because after all he was pretty well all she had. And all of the work running the farm with these kids! And we were so poor! I mean we were really poor, and we continued to be poor. And then eventually we moved to the village, and we moved there because we had three kids starting high school the same year. And it was touch and go whether they'd have to take us out of school because they could hardly afford to feed us. And all of that basic uncertainty of life can't have been very easy. No wonder we're not full of confidence. None of us are. Because they were fearful. But that fear has always been there. I can't relate it to events, but I know that certain things in

> my childhood increased it. I don't remember them but I've figured them out, or people have said something about them. I know when my father took sick, when he had a very bad heart attack when we were all quite young, that things were awful. Just awful! Because he couldn't work. He couldn't work for something like three years and we were running the farm and my brothers were eleven and ten, I was nine, Harry was six and Sammy was three. That's five kids to feed. And my brothers had to work. The first summer they went away from home to work for the summer, my first two brothers. And there was a point when we thought we would have to sell the farm and I don't even remember that, but I believe that that happened when I was about ten. And I understand from a reported conversation between my mother and my godmother, that my mother figures that that's the time when I became really withdrawn, was when there was talk about leaving the farm. And I never said anything about it, naturally – I never said anything about anything – but it was there and it was probably eating me. It was a fear of losing everything that we had, and at one point quite a lot of fear of losing my father. Although when you're nine years old you don't believe that somebody could actually die, it seems quite likely that he could have died. He almost died. He was very, very sick, and he was away from home for a long time.

In partial answer to the question, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?", Jean describes her mother's life in greater detail, remarking that her mother was lucky to marry because she was unattractive, had no confidence and didn't fit the notion of what a woman *should be*.

> My mother was lucky to marry. She was quite plain, very sober. She had quite a poor opinion of herself, of her intelligence, of her attractiveness. The one thing that she had going for her was that she was strong. I mean she was physically strong; she had been the support of the family. She had been really resentful about it, you know, being the oldest and having to raise her younger brothers and sister. And having her mother die young when she was 19. And she had never been close to her mother and then of course she had to live with the guilt. She felt really guilty and to this day feels guilty about her mother, because she feels her mother died alone. And that she was too busy being unhappy, being a teenager and being unhappy and wanting to see the world and wanting to get out and wanting to never have to cook for another threshing gang, ever. And wanting to go away. And in fact when the war came, my mother was saved by the war basically. She joined up immediately, split for the East, and if she hadn't married she'd have been gone. But she met my father within six months, and married and become pregant immediately, and was stuck back on the farm. But unfortunately – I mean actually it was in some ways unfortunate for her that she met my father, because she could have been a free woman. But they had a really good relationship and that was nice. It was the only good thing about 27 years, because after all, the poverty, the sickness, the children and all of that stuff was not so hot. But she felt like an outcast. I mean she felt that she wasn't a real woman. I mean I may be projecting onto her, but she always felt clumsy. I mean she was clumsy. She had no physical self-confidence. She wasn't attractive. She's much more attractive now than she was then. That side of the family has really wide cheekbones like me, but they have a long, long face. Well, her picture's over there. That's not a particularly good picture of her; she's really unphotogenic. She's much more attractive in person. But anyway, as young people, she and her father and her father's mother were honestly as plain as a mud fence. Honest to God. Tended to look about 35 when they were 17. And very heavy lower jaw and narrow eyes and stuff. So she just felt she was a complete disaster. She had more education than the average farm girl. I thought I was an outcast at high school, but let me tell you, a farm girl going to high school in her generation was as scarce as hen's teeth. It was just very unusual. And so she, I think she was really nobody. Like she

> was sort of me, only much more so, everything more so, when she was young. And so it was just purest something or other that she met my father and became married. Although she said herself that she almost abandoned him at the alter when she actually got there and realized that she was doing this, and she didn't think it was such a good idea. Oh well, anyway. I don't remember what my train of thought was except that she, like me, was not a regular woman, and she was not an ordinary woman. If she hadn't married my father who was a really good match for her in a lot of ways, she would have had a hard time, a much harder time than she did. I mean she always had the fact, even though we had an awful time when I was young, she had a husband who loved her and children who were obedient and respectful and clever and all of that stuff. And we always ate and she was near her family, so things weren't all that awful, I mean physically awful. But she had a lot more emotional support than I often think she might have had if she had been unluckier, and either not married at all or married someone who was not such a good match. Anyway, this is really getting off the track.

Jean explains that because she was so dependent on her mother, her discovery that her mother was not as strong as she had originally assumed was difficult to resolve. The result is a relationship which feels uncomfortable.

> It was funny, I've always thought of my mother as being such a strong person. When I finally figured out many years later that she wasn't as strong as all that, I've never forgiven her for not being perfect, because I always thought she was. That she was so much stronger than I was, because I was obviously such a weakling. And that after I figured out that she was just as fallible as everybody else, I couldn't stand it. I couldn't stand it that she does things that irritate me. Most people go through this when they're 16; they don't go through it when they're 30. They don't suddenly realize they can't stand the fact that their mother irritates them some of the time, you know? Although we did better than most because I don't see that much of her and I'm very fond of her. But I'm much more fond of her in absentia than I am in person. There's just too much stuff left there from the old days of me being absent, of me being non-communicative. And so she's not very comfortable with me, because she doesn't understand. She feels that she doesn't understand me and so she says she never knows what to say to me. And having her being uncomfortable makes me uncomfortable. It's a shame! Because she's great; she's really neat. She's still a lot stronger than I am. God, she's made it! She's doing okay for someone who was made a widow at 51 and had to fend for herself. Perfectly obvious that she – she comes from the other side of the family; she could live 20 years, she could live 40 years – that she had to have a life. Strange thing having two lives – all those years with my father and then a completely separate life at the end of it. Oh well!

From Jean's answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" we learn that she values her family. She sees her family as a connection to the past, not as part of her present life. In spite of feeling somewhat uncomfortable with her mother, she's happy that her mother has put together a new life for herself and looks forward to a closer connection with her in the future. The family members she felt closest to (her father and her brother, William) have both died.

Family is primarily a connection with the past, rather than the present. My father of course is dead. I was really, really quite attached to him, but I didn't see a lot of him. He was sick a lot during the last years that I was at home, and then he died when I first started to teach, after I had been away in university for five years. I managed somehow, by some miracle, to spend the last summer he was alive at home. It was very unusual by that time, for me to spend a summer at home. I mean we actually had quite a lovely summer. One of my brothers had got married and he and my father and I spent a lot of time driving around looking at crops and stuff. Not talking particularly, but just being together. And I really miss him. I dream about him once in a while. Not often. And my mother of course, is off having an adventure because she was 51. She just started another life and she has managed to do just that. Which is all of the things that she does. I wouldn't choose to live the way she does, but I'm glad that she's figured out something so that she can be independent, because she really values her independence. She's not ready to stay in the grandmother house. She's just not. I wouldn't mind having her with me as long as we could be separate. Like I wouldn't mind having her live – I've been trying to talk her into coming to live in Edmonton, but she's not ready. But I mean when she is actually older I hope she will live in the same city that I do. And even, by that time who knows, in the same house. Because she's really very good at letting people have space. After all, she managed to let me have space all those years when I was completely impossible to live with. There was a lot of respect for privacy in our family, even with all the difficulties of having a huge family in a small house. It was really important and we all somehow managed that, or at least they managed it for me. I don't know how they managed it – I was pretty much unaware of what they did for the rest of them. And my brothers are all back there doing what they're doing, being farmers and plumbers and whatever. I'm glad they're there, but I'm going home this summer and we'll see what happens. I quite miss my brother that died, even though I saw quite a lot less of him because he went off. He was much more of a searcher than I was. He was very, very much so. I don't know whether he ever stayed at a job longer than six months. And he was extremely bright but he dropped out of school at about grade 10 – had the kind of mind where he could figure out almost anything in his head, but he wrote really slowly and he almost never finished an exam. But if he was ever given a multiple choice exam, which they didn't do in those days – I think he had something like the second highest IQ in the school. I mean he was really bright but he just couldn't make it in the school system. And he did a little of this and a little of that. But he was also really kind of unstable. And in his own way very unhappy, very much looking for something that he didn't know what he was looking for. And he got married when he was about 25 to a woman who had two children already, and they had another child and then he died. They knew, they didn't know until they were married, that he had the same heart condition that my father had had, and my grandfather and my uncle. But I think they were only married four years and it was really tough for them. Of course there was my sister-in-law with three kids and no means of support, and she was three years younger than I was. God, she's had an awful life! She has had an awful life! Whenever I think I'm having a hard time, I think about my sister-in-law with the three kids with the different fathers. The first one was a psychotic and beat her up. The second was okay but he got killed in an accident. And the third one was my brother and he died. Now that lady really gets the breaks. And she's still struggled along. She still lives her life. I think when she and William were married she went back to school and got herself upgraded to grade 12, because she quit school when she was 15 and got pregnant. And then I think manpower put her through on a keypunch operator course or something. And I think now she actually works and supports the kids. But the oldest kid has always been difficult and in fact is disturbed, and comes and goes – sometimes lives in the house, sometimes doesn't. He's been in foster care. He's really been a trial, and it isn't Joan's fault. I mean he's had a hard life too. So anyway, that's sort of off the track, but it always seemed such a shame that William, when he was kind of getting to a stage where – I mean now, I wish I knew him now. Because I was still

groping around myself in those days and so was was he, and we never really talked to each other. We had a lot in common and it's really too bad that we never actually talked about it because we have a lot in common. But both us were too busy trying to find our way out of our own paper bag. I don't know.

Jean has some regrets in regard to one member of her family, brother Harry. She explains why in answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?"

I feel guilty about my brother, Harry. Well, that's life! I gave my brother, Harry, an awful life when he was a child and he has grown up sort of strange because of it. And I didn't know any better at the time and now I know better and I feel quilty, and it doesn't change Harry. He's what he is. He's grown up now and he's married and he has a child and he is incredibly shy. You think I have a hard time socially? He just can't go out in public. He has no confidence in public. Poor Harry! We always referred to him as, 'Poor Harry!' I have four brothers and the first two were, the first three of us – I have two brothers and then me, were born in three and a half years – and then three later Poor Harry was born, and then three years later Sammy was born. And Poor Harry was unfortunately too young for the first three of us, who were kind were kind of a little bunch and we tended to do things together. And he was always too old for Sammy, who was a baby. But he was the kind of baby who kind of could do things. He was pretty and he was cute, he could whistle, he learned to walk young, he had charm. I mean, he had charm! Harry didn't have any of these things. Harry can't whistle to this day, and he doesn't have any charm; he's a big lump. And the first three of us and Sammy were all – well, it's hard to tell with Sammy because he's 10 years younger than my oldest brother, but the first three of us were really quick in school. I was accelerated in grade four, and we were all really quick was what we were. And Poor Harry, unfortunately, was not quick; he was average. But everybody thought that because he was our brother he should be quick, and therefore he was slow, which he wasn't – he was average. So that didn't help him any. Also I understand that when my youngest brother was born Harry was really very jealous. He had the worst case of sibling whatnot rivalry that you can imagine. As my mother said, 'His nose was out of joint.' He had been the baby, and he had been the baby for three years, and suddenly he wasn't the baby anymore. And he wasn't the baby to anybody – because the first three of us – I was six – Sammy was this cute little thing and we all kind of paid him a lot of attention. And Harry was just lost. He was completely lost in the shuffle. He was a classic middle child even though he isn't. I'm the middle child numerically, but he was the middle child in spirit. He just was never the right age, he was never the right size, he couldn't do anything. And we treated him badly, basically. We wouldn't let him come with us and play. And we told him that he was dumb. And we did all that stuff that kids do to other kids when they don't know any better. And they figure it out five years later. And there's old Harry who apparently blossomed when we all left home. We all left home. I mean you feel like that – what do you think I feel like? Poor Harry! When we finally left home and there he was. He had Mom and Dad all to himself for the first time ever. Because Sammy was really independent. He had friends. We had moved to the village by that time, and he had friends in the village and he was gone all the time. He was off doing his number, being an independent speedy little young whatever he was. And Harry was much more of a clinger. My oldest brothers could drive when they were four years old, and they'd had a lot of responsibility, and they worked away from home. Yes, drive cars. They worked in the fields since they were really little. We all did. But like Harry was just a little bit too young, so he never got to do things that the rest of us had done young. He was just a little too young. So they could all drive when they were little and Harry was about 16 before he finally learned how to drive, because there wasn't any need for him to drive. There was a need for the older ones to drive. I didn't, incidentally, learn either, until I was 16. But there wasn't any need for Harry to learn to drive, so of course nobody taught

> him. Because of course by that time we were living in the village and it was illegal. But nobody ever caught the other guys out on the farm. So things like that. He never got any of father's time. Mother used to have to defend him. She used to have to say, 'He's okay.' And we all snorted and hooted and wouldn't let him play. Well, you know, you have to live with it. There's nothing you can do about the fact that there he is and he has grown up quite different from the rest of us. I think he quite deliberately grew up different. He became a plodder. He became the one that had a bank account when all the rest of us were the kind of people that if we had money, we'd spend it. If we didn't, we did without. And I'm like that to this day. And I think so are the rest of all of them. But not old Harry. Harry is so careful, he is so careful with his whole life you want to strangle him. And the funny thing about it is that even though after I went away I kind of clued in to the fact that I had done Harry a terrible disservice as a child, even to this day when I am in the room with him he drives me nuts. He just irritates me so much I just want to say, 'Harry, for Christ's sake don't do that! Don't talk like that! Don't think like that! Grow up!' I just can't stand it. So I don't spend much time with him because I feel guilty. But I regret that. Who wouldn't, you know?

The timidity and fearfulness that Jean experienced in her early years also permeated her life at school. In spite of her intelligence and academic success at school, she was intimidated socially. In addition she experienced the stigma of being 'the new kid' at school – new to the village, new to the town and later, new to the city.

> I mean talk about social outcasts, we were the untouchables of the village. It wasn't hard. All you had to be was the last people that arrived there. Anybody in this century. But kids are hard enough anyway on strangers, on new kids. But kids that are coming in with manure still on their boots, basically, who don't know anything, who don't know how to talk, and don't know how to dance, don't know how to do their hair, and don't know how whatever. Don't know everything that everybody learned because they grew up in the village. The same thing happened when I moved to town, and I was from the village and from the farm, and everybody else was from town. You know? It's one of the reasons that I didn't go to university when I was 16, quite aside from all the other stuff. It would have just been the same thing all over again. There I was, the only person who was straight from the farm. Because I went from the farm to the village to a big town, to Edmonton. And the adjustment to Edmonton was not any easier. Fortunately, instead of then going on to Paris or New York and making it even harder, I retreated a step and I went and taught in the country. Because it was going to be hard enough. It was actually one of the smart moves I made. It was actually the only job I was offered at the time, but teaching jobs were not easy to get. But the difficulties of learning the teaching job, which were many, were not, at least, compounded by having to try and teach city kids that I knew nothing about. At least I was teaching farm or at least country kids, that I had some clue about. As it was, the kids were pretty much foreigners to me, but I had some idea where they were coming from because I had come from there too.

Being perceived as different from her classmates because she was fat and because she was younger (she had been accelerated) added to Jean's growing fearfulness. She explains that she was afraid to appear too smart for fear of being more conspicious.

When I was in elementary school I went to a one-room country school. It was so small that it opened with my oldest brother. It had been closed and there had to be six kids to open the school, and it was opened with my two older brothers. They sent my second brother to school when he was four so they could have a big enough enrollment to re-open the school. And we got one of these little 18 year old teachers out of a normal school. We'd get a different one each year - they'd work a year, they'd get married and then we'd get another one. And they all looked the same. I didn't have a man teacher until I was about grade five. I didn't think there could be one. I had never heard of the possibility of there being a man teacher. And along with being fat, which was a problem in a very tiny school, which made me slightly different from everybody else, when I was in grade four I was accelerated. Partly because there wasn't anybody else in grade four - the only other person in grade four moved away and there was nobody in grade four. And so they put me in grade five because there was other people in grade five. I mean it was true. I was smart enough to be in grade five. At Christmas time I stopped doing the grade four work and started doing the grade five work and it was as simple as that. I actually beat my brother. I had a brother in grade five. That didn't help me any, to move into a grade with my brother. It didn't help me with my brother, let me tell you. And then to actually beat him by point two percent at the end of that year didn't help. And I had quite a lot of difficulty in the school because of that acceleration. I mean I remember the kids hassling me about it. And from then on - I mean I had started school when I was five as it was. I then moved into high school - I started grade nine when I was 12. So I was the only kid from the country with mud on her boots, but I was also a baby. And I could never relate to anybody. I read about 150 books in grade 10, under the desk, and I still managed to get all my work done. I mean I just was not there. I didn't talk to anybody. Because I went to a village high school; I went to a two room village high school. There were nine kids in grade nine, and five kids in grade 10, and two kids in grade 11 when I started in high school. And we were all in the same room and we had one teacher. An extension of elementary school. And then - but I tell you, talk about culture shock - when I went in to grade 12 there were 400 kids in the school! I mean it was like a factory. Unbelievable! So you know I had lots of stuff to be fearful of. Constantly things happened that were intolerable. And I remember, I'm quite sure that I went out of my way not to grow up. Because I felt that I was so much younger than everybody else, that it might be that I would get out of school early, but I was damned if I would grow up any faster than I thought I should. And in fact I didn't grow up at all. Because it's normal to socialize with the kids in your class, but when the kids in your class are three years older than you are, there's just nothing to talk about. I didn't have any friends. Well, for a kid that had more natural self-confidence it wouldn't have been so painful. For a kid that believed in themselves it wouldn't have been so difficult. But I didn't. I didn't know what I was doing and I was lost all the time. And I had no social skills, had no power at all, and no support from anybody. So I couldn't develop any self-confidence. There wasn't any way to develop it. And I wasn't even smarter than everybody else once I got to high school. I was certainly smart, but I wasn't smarter than anybody else, because there were several fairly smart kids in that class. And besides, well, actually, I retract that. I probably was smarter than quite a lot of the people in that class, but I was so crippled by the fact that I didn't know what I was doing most of the time, and I was so afraid, that I didn't learn. I mean I wasn't much of an achiever and I didn't all through high school. Through some miracle of chance, by studying one and a half days, I managed to get a high enough average in grade 12 to go to university, when I finally decided to go to university. But it wasn't through any efforts of my own. It just happened that I had a high enough average to go to university because I had that much on the ball and I had learned that much just by kind of being there, to get that high an average. Which was actually pretty good because it was a 70 percent failure rate in Chemistry that year in grade 12 in the province. It was really terrible. And I got 57. I was quite proud of it. I was one of the elite - I managed to pass Chemistry. But I passed Chemistry by what I had actually learned by hanging around in the

> class and not any other thing. But at university it took me a long time to learn how to study because I had never bothered. I had never studied; I had never had to. I had always been able to do no work and pass. And that's all I needed to do. I mean there wasn't any point – it made you conspicuous to be the top of the class, and so I had never gone out of my way to be at the top of the class. I didn't mind beating my brother, William, but I had no particular desire to be the top of the class if it required work. So I didn't. Anyway.

After graduating from high school at age 16, Jean went to work in a bank. Her only options at that time were marriage (which her father wanted for her but which didn't seem possible or attractive) or work (which her mother expected of her and which was necessary because her family couldn't continue to support her).

> My father wanted me to be married because he thought that's what I wanted. I remember denying hotly that I wanted to be married and if I was married that I would ever have a large – I think the issue arose over large weddings and white gowns. And he really wanted to see me married because he thought that's what I wanted and that that's what would make me happy. I of course was 16 and very sensitive and so we didn't discuss it, we just let it go. I didn't believe it would happen and therefore I didn't want to want it, and so I didn't. My mother, on the other hand, didn't believe that any woman should ever assume that she would not have to look after herself and maybe a family too, or that any man should assume that he would not have to look after himself. So my brothers were all taught to cook and iron and look after children and all of that sort of thing and I always knew that I was going to work. Whatever I worked at and however long I would work, I always knew I was going to work. What were my options? The family could not keep people that didn't work. We were really poor. So unless I was getting married at 16 – which is when I graduated from high school – which seemed really unlikely and not at all attractive, I had to work. Like when you dropped out of school or when you finished school or when school was over, you had to start making a living and that was it. When I left school of course I was 16, and I got a job at one of the banks, the theory being that I would do something until I got a little older. At least that was my decision. By that time I was making all of my own decisions, good, bad and indifferent, and I wouldn't listen to anybody.

Leaving home was a traumatic experience for Jean, being as fearful and insecure as she was. She tells of her fear of being on her own and her timidity on her new job.

> And when I first moved to town when I was 16, the first six months I had a roommate – oh, it wasn't even that long – and at least I wasn't alone. But after that I was alone. I had a place of my own and I went home on weekends and I probably phoned home every day. Because I knew that this was what it was like growing up and being independent, but God, I must say that I didn't like it too much. It was always that knowledge that you had to grow up and go away, and I just didn't want to. I didn't want to, but you had to and it was going to be awful and you just had to live with it.
> I went to work after school because I had to go to work. I didn't know what else to do. I didn't want to go back to school – I mean I had grade 12. So I got a job. And it was terrible for the first year. I was so timid that I didn't learn very fast. When you're afraid your mind kind of blocks learning anything, and that's always been true with me on any new job. It takes me quite a while to pick it up. But it has everything to do with just being nervous, and nothing to do with my ability. But after I'd been there a year and a half I was so good at what I was doing that I was really bored and it obviously couldn't last. And so I decided that I would quit after my second year was up.

The realities of life on a minimum wage is also a part of Jean's experience. So is the reality of finding herself in a job which offers no opportunity for advancement.

> At my first job I made $176 a month. I was so poor in those days that it was the only time that I actually had a budget that worked. Because I had so little money, it was budgeted down to the quarters that I needed to do the laundry at the laundromat. I think I was paying about $40 a month rent, and I knew exactly what I was going to do, day in and day out, and exactly what I was going to spend on lunch. I mean talk about a regular life so that you can lose weight. My life was so regular in those days. There were no extra options. I went home on the weekends and then I could eat real food, but during the week it was certainly a test. It was 1963, when I first worked at the Bank of Commerce. They paid the minimum wage. They always have and always will pay the minimum wage. And in those days women could work for the Bank of Commerce for 20 years – at *any* bank I mean, I retract that, for *any* bank – and work for 20 years and never have a position of any kind of authority. They were just kind of like the trusties in the prisons. And they were also at the top of the grid, such as it was. But no, if a woman went to university and took business administration or something, she could then come back to the bank and get a job at a higher level, but it would have to be a fairly extraordinary woman.

Dissatisfied with her prospects at the bank, Jean considered other options. She describes the discrimination she experienced during an interview for acceptance into training as a meteorological technician.

> And it was a matter of I could go to – at the time I could think of only three options, and in the town where I lived getting a better job wasn't one of them. Getting another job was one of them but there was no such thing as a better job for a person who had grade 12 and two years at the Bank of Commerce. Another one was to go to technical school and take some kind of one year or two year course and upgrade myself to some other kind of job. And I thought of taking a library technician job or something. During that period one of the things that I had wanted to do was be a meteorologist. Not that I knew anything about math or physics, but I like clouds and my father had studied that during the war, and I liked all those pictures of clouds. And I went and took civil service tests in Regina. I took a day off work and went to Regina and took civil service tests to apply to be a meteorological technician. And they let me take the test and I did really well on the test and I got so far as to be interviewed. And they told me at the interview that they didn't hire women meteorlogical technicians. And then I was so pissed off because I thought they could have told me before I took the stupid test. Why wait until then to realize that if I'd have been a man, I would have made it because I had a high enough mark on the test? And I was so angry! They said to me, 'What would you do if you were 200 air miles from the nearest whatnot, and the diesel plant went down?' And I thought, 'What would a man do? He'd either fix it or he'd freeze!' You know! I mean, 'Aaagh!' Anyway, that was sort of aborted. So I thought I would do something more suitable and I'd become a librarian or something.

Jean decided to go to university because a friend suggested it was her best option. To her mind the important issues at this time were leaving her home territory, gaining more independence and forcing herself to grow up.

> And my other option was to go to university but I didn't know what you took at university. I didn't know what you did if you did go to university. So I wrote a letter to my friend Marv, who was at that time, he had been my grade 10 teacher and one of the few people I liked during that year. He and his family had moved to the coast and I wrote him a letter and said, 'What should I do? These are my options. What should I do?' And he wrote me a letter saying well, he didn't presume to tell me what to do but if he was me, he'd go to university. And I thought, 'Oh good!' Which meant that that's what I decided to do. Because I would not have even said, 'Oh good' – I wouldn't have even recognized the fact that he'd given me some advice. So off I went. In fact, two years later I quit the bank and came out here, two months before university started, without a job, with $16 in my pocket, without a friend or anything, because it seemed like the thing to do at the time. And obviously it was a terrible idea and I had an awful, awful, awful summer. Later I asked my mother, 'Why didn't you say that it was a terrible idea?' And she said, 'I did.' And I honestly couldn't remember her saying that because I just wasn't listening. I was independent, you see. I mean, they couldn't have stopped me. It's hard for me to even say that there was or wasn't support. I realized later of course that it was a terrible decision to go that summer, because my mother had also gone back to school that summer and she and I had been the regular wage, because my father had had a really bad heart attack when I was quite young. And the reason why he was a service man was because he had to be self-employed – he had to only work when he was healthy enough to work. He had a terrible heart and in fact is now dead. I shouldn't have quit that summer because one of us should have stayed working, but all I was thinking of was myself. And in fact I brought quite a lot of hardship on the family, but I didn't even figure it out until quite a bit later. They supported me when it was obvious I was going to do it. I was going to do it no matter what. But the support was always much more moral than financial, since they didn't have any money. And one of the reasons for working the two years was that that, in the eyes of the Canada Student Loan Board, made me independent. I didn't have to declare their income on my loan forms or anything, and I went through university five years completely on loans. I only even worked one or one and a half summers out of that time. Because in those days a woman couldn't do anything in the summer to make enough money to make it worth staying in the city. There was not a job you could do that would do any more than get you through the summer. So the first summer I went home and worked on the farm. The second summer I went East and worked in a fishing camp for the summer and then I travelled around the East coast. I went off with my $99 in an incredibly rattletrap car that wasn't even insured, off to the East coast and back, and went to university on loans again. And in the fall and the third year I worked in the university library because I had graduated with my BA and I didn't know what I wanted to do. I have deliberately forced myself, first to go away to university and then to kind of stand it for five years including a nervous breakdown, and to go to a job that I didn't want to do and stay there. And then once things got going okay to go someplace else and try, start again, do another thing. I mean trying to be independent, you know. Trying to break away from the fact that all I want to do is crawl in a hole and be looked after by somebody. I have managed to prevent myself from getting looked after by anybody through the process. So I don't know who I'm trying to fool. I mean there's got to be a point where you can give up, when you don't have to force yourself to be independent anymore. You either are independent or it doesn't matter. But I haven't had any luck.

It took a long time for Jean to get over missing her family and home, and even longer to gain a sense of being settled in her own place. It appears that although the issue of growing up and being independent was important to her on an intellectual level, emotionally she was not ready for the change. She makes clear again that her brothers

also had these problems.

> I ended up at the University of Alberta because I got accepted here. I didn't want to go to a university close to home; I didn't figure I could be independent any closer than 900 miles. I was really in for independence at that time, because I had been living in town and going home every weekend and I'd phone home every day. And I thought,'This won't do!' I thought that going away might mean that I would grow up. Growing up was fairly important to me and I never seemed to make any progress. I didn't feel any different than I had when I was a kid living at home, even though I wasn't a kid living at home. I was a kid living in town basically, doing a job like a grown-up, getting paid like a grown-up, but not feeling in the least like a grown-up. And you can imagine what it was like when I finally, even at the age of 18, moved out here. I was so homesick, but I couldn't go home. I mean I couldn't go home! You grow up, you have to go away. I mean that's it! And it really took me a long time after I did to stop feeling temporary. It didn't take very long before I knew I didn't live there anymore. It didn't take very long that while I was away - when I came out here I was away for 10 months, and when I went home it wasn't home anymore, even though there it all was. And the trouble was, neither was this. And I didn't have a place that I considered my home, where I lived, for probably seven or eight years. And it's only now that I actually feel that I live here. Somehow in the intervening years I arrived as an adult. And now when people come to visit me, they come to visit me at my place. And I don't know how people manage that. Some people manage that quite easily, but I sure had a hard time with it. I don't know how other people do it. Maybe they don't have - I don't know why we were so bound. And my brothers, my oldest brother used to get terribly - well, he only went away from home once, twice. He went up and worked in the mines a couple of winters when he was about 18 or 19, and he used to get terribly homesick. And eventually he married and settled sort of next door and he has never been away and he never pretended to want to go away. He is there where the family is and where the neighbours are and the kids he went to school with are. And his kids are going to school there and he runs the family farm and he is never going to go away and he doesn't want to and he doesn't care. Whereas William, the second son, was the searcher. He was the one that was always looking for a place of his own and was never satisfied until he married and then he felt he had a place of his own.

Also involved in Jean's growing up was the idea of becoming a woman. She explains that this was especially difficult because being single, she was treated like and thought of herself as a girl.

> And in fact it was many years - someone actually had to suggest to me that I should think of myself as a woman. This was when I was about 22. And I had never applied the word to myself. I thought of myself as a girl, even at that point. Well I'd be 21, and I had never thought of myself as a woman. It was a completely novel idea. And I thought, 'Oh God, there's something the matter with me,' and I still couldn't. He was my counsellor at the time - this was when things were really awful - he said, "Now everyday you wake up in the morning, say to yourself, say, 'I am a woman.'" And I thought, 'I can't do that. I'll feel really stupid.' And in fact it didn't work quite that easily, but gradually over the next few years I kind of got it. And only really now, actually since the Women's Movement, have I thought of myself as a woman. And it's a completely semantic thing. But as long as you're single you're treated like a girl basically, no matter what you do. And you think of yourself as a girl as long as you're single, for a long time, unless you kind of fix your mind on it and say, 'Well, I'm over 30. How long can a person go on being a girl?' Even though you feel the same. That feeling went on for a long time. I mean a long time!

The feeling Jean experienced living away from home and trying to be independent was generally one of unhappiness. She led an isolated and lonely life and needless to say her schoolwork suffered for the first few years.

> But in university things went really badly. Mostly having to do with the fact that I couldn't adjust to – I don't know what it was that I couldn't adjust to, I've never understood it very well. All I know is that I was really unhappy. And very lonely. Very isolated! I got more and more isolated. Eventually I was so isolated that I couldn't even look at people. I was working; I was going to university and working. I mean I was in contact with people all of the time, but I couldn't relate to them at all. It just got worse and worse. Until eventually I couldn't sleep and I almost failed my second year I guess. I failed three out of five exams at Christmas. And that had never happened to me. I couldn't fail! It was not possible! But I did. And I ended up on Valium and somehow, I'll never know how I pulled out of it, because I passed the year. I worked like the devil the last two months of the year. I did 11 papers in six weeks or something, and I passed courses that I hadn't passed all year and managed to pass the final. I'll never know what turned around, because I actually got through the year and I didn't think I would.

Jean sees a connection between her state of mind and gaining weight – she gains weight when she is unhappy and insecure, and loses weight when she is happy and secure.

> It was that year that I sort of hit – well all of it had to do and was connected with my weight as well. Before I had left my job I had gone on a diet when I was 17 or 18 and lost about 50 to 60 pounds. I've never been small. On the two occasions when I was quite light – I've never looked like you – I was still – the least I have weighed is 145 pounds since I was pre–pubescent. I've always been stocky. And that's how I see myself, even when I'm 145 I do. I've often wondered, if I could get down to 125, which is the target weight, if I would still think I was fat. I probably would. I don't know how you change the image. I've never been able to do it before. Anyway, before I left home I lost all that weight, I had my first boy friend, things were really going well. I had this job, I had figured out how to do it, I was good at it. And that was the point at which I quit and came out here where I had no friends, no boyfriend. I left everything. The boyfriend I basically didn't care much about, but everything had to do with social status. I mean to be 18 years old and not have a boyfriend, even though he was not very exciting and I can't remember his face. I do remember his name. And in fact, I really did wonder what it was all about because basically he did nothing for me. Which I have since found out is quite normal for a first boyfriend. Anyway, but when I came out here there was just nothing, and I had to start all over and it was really – and I gained 60 pounds in my first year. I wouldn't go home at Christmas. My family was really upset. They sent me the ticket to come home and I sent it back. I mean I was really, really selfish! And I didn't go home for 10 months and when I went home in the spring I had gained 60 pounds and by fall I weighed more than I ever had. I was over 200 pounds and I had never weighed that much before. The summer had not been very good for me either at home. It wasn't the last summer I spent at home but it was the last for awhile. And the second year was the worst year, the worst year in every way. But somehow I got it together and finished up and got kind of back on the track. But always my weight is reflected in my state of mind, and my state of mind is fed off my weight. And it takes so little to kind of turn it around. The next time I was really light, because from then it was sort of 10 pounds off, five pounds on over a period of a year. And so over the next five years I got down quite a ways and things went better and better.

The period of weight gain Jean experienced at university was repeated during another

stressful time in her life when she was not settled, work-wise or residence-wise.

> To jump ahead, when I finished SAIT, when I left SAIT and I had a hard time finding a job - this is after I quit teaching. I quit teaching after four years - this is definitely jumping ahead. I quit teaching after four years and went to Calgary and had a wonderful time. I had a second childhood, going to technical school and taking radio and had great fun for two years. But after that I went through another long period ending now, when I was sort of semi-employed and moved a lot and couldn't get settled and tended to leave things behind, and things didn't go well. I gradually gained back all the weight that I had lost over the previous years.

Jean is clear that she wants to break the gain/lose cycle. She speaks of her frustration with not being able to change. She believes she is fighting against forces such as a genetic predisposition to gain weight, the history of family eating patterns, threat of an early death, and the very real difficulties of dieting.

> You know, it's so frustrating! Because what bothered me about it was like I hadn't learned anything. All that painful 10 years from when I was 17 to when I was 27, during which I very painfully lost the 60 pounds and a little more, and then suddenly I gained it all back again over the next five years, and now I've got to start all over again. As if I hadn't learned anything! That's what frustrates me. Like you never do grow up. You never do get it figured out, problems solved. At one point I thought I had solved certain problems and I didn't. They just came back. I can't envision the rest of my life like that. What I want is a turn around. What I want is like a conversion. What I want is to become a different person. Not the person who always goes through that cycle, but a different person. A person who doesn't care about food. Because I mean there are various reasons - genetic reasons and physical reasons - why it is very difficult for me to lose weight and keep it off. There are almost no members of my family - well, no members that are underweight, and there are almost no members that are of normal weight. And furthermore it's really dangerous. Like the mortality rate is very high in my family and people die really young - all of arteriosclerosis, all of hardening of the arteries. It's suicide to be fat! It's also almost impossible not to be fat. And there are members of my family who are 350 pounds - not my immediate family, but my cousins. And it's just so hopeless! It's like I don't want to be this person, with this person's problems. I'd sooner be a different person with a different person's problems, because I'm sick of these. Because I can't seem to solve them. It's really complicated; there's a lot of factors.
> It's true that if I have a normal diet, if I eat like everbody else, my cholesteral level is double normal. And if I have a diet that excludes everything, just about everything that includes cholesteral, I can bring it down 100 points, which is just above normal. Either way my arteries have been filling up from birth just like everybody else in my family. And there are more people dead than alive in my family. Mostly in the 40s. Early 40s. And some younger. I mean in this generation, they're younger. And they're partly younger, as far as I can tell, because they didn't have the real hard times when they were young, the way my father's family did. They spent a while when they must have been thin - there wasn't anything to eat. So they didn't actually start to put on weight until they started to eat. Whereas we've always eaten. We grew up on a farm. We grew up on a farm with home-made butter and cream and all of that, butchered our own beef. We grew up in a very high fat diet because that's the normal farm diet. And it's deadly! So no, you never really believe that you'll actually die, and I sure would hate to think that I actually am going to, but God, the percentages are really bad. It's bothering me right now because I only recently heard that my cousin died. Often for long periods of time it doesn't bother me much at all. But right now, well I very recently

> found out that my cousin died and he was 34, which is my age. The doctors say I have to lose weight. *Have to* lose weight! I have to become a normal weight. And furthermore, I have to stay a normal weight for the rest of my life. And that is very difficult. I mean it means constant vigilance. It means never eating like a normal person. Never! Never eating like the people that you know who eat like normal people. Never eating bacon and eggs. Or if you eat bacon and eggs, never eating another stitch of fat for the next seven weeks or something, or however long it takes to get it out of your system. What kind of life is that? It's like being a cripple. And in some ways it is being crippled, because it's in a social way. Because when you go out to eat it's impossible! It's very, very difficult to maintain a low cholestoral diet publically, because people – I mean things are cooked in fat, they are cooked in butter, they are served in butter, they are served with sauces. When you order anything you have to say, 'No butter on the whatever, and no sour cream, and no salt, and no gravy.' You can't have those things. 'No cheeses; leave off the cheese!' You can't have those things. And it is very difficult to go out with people, you know? I don't like my garlic bread without butter. I don't like my steak piece this big, because that's all the steak I can have. And no chips. You can't live a normal life. And it makes a person want to take to drink. At least there's no cholestoral in alchohol. I also quit smoking, and that was one of the things that happened during that year was I quit smoking. I took up smoking in university and I smoked very heavily for some years, and then I somehow managed to quit again. But oh God, it was just one extra thing. I often wish I could go back to smoking, except that it's so disgusting I can't stand it. So, I think we've got off the track.

Most destructive to Jean, it seems, is the social attitude toward fat people which blames them and judges them to be weak. This she feels she must fight against always, believing that perhaps she can't marry because then she would stop fighting.

> In the end, the fact that there may be lots of pretty good reasons why I gain weight easily and lose weight hard, and continually have this thing, doesn't matter. What matters is the external person who has to relate to the world, and the world who doesn't understand. It doesn't matter. It's not like, let's see, it's not like I'm scarred all over from a bad burn. People can forgive that because it wasn't your fault. But somehow it's your fault for being fat. Like it's a weakness of character. And I have to fight against this kind of belief, that people think I have a weak character and that I think that I have a weak character. You know, I mean I can never give in.
> I have often felt that I can't marry, because if I marry I'll give up. I'll give up trying to lose weight, I'll give up trying to be successful – that I'll just let somebody else make all those hard decisions for me, or I won't make them at all. I'm afraid that if I were ever to allow anybody to look after me, to be in the position of looking after me, that I would give up myself. And I also know that it's against my character to give up, and so I will never allow that to happen. In fact, I would make it real difficult for anybody that tried to make me. Well I know I would. I'm not easy to live with. I'm really moody, and very set in my ways. I mean you get set in your ways if you've lived alone for 18 years, as I have. Well, much longer than that actually.

The extent to which Jean is effected by being overweight is further evidenced in her answer to the question "What do you dislike about yourself?"

> But the main thing I dislike about myself is my body. I've always disliked it. I don't like the way I look and I don't want to look the way I do and I don't want to be burdened with a body that is quite so biodegradable as this one is. I don't want to die young. And it seems really likely that I will and I resent that. I resent the fact that I want to lose weight and that I find it really hard, not only because of my personality problems but because of my body. I'm programmed partly because I'm a woman and women are programmed to gain

> weight. But because I am a Harris woman, I am really programmed to gain weight. And it is only through a lifetime of struggle that I've managed not to be 350 pounds. Because there are women in my family that are 350 pounds. And I haven't given up quite to that extent, but I could have. It's perfectly possible for me to weight that much, and it's been a struggle not to weigh that much. But I don't weigh as much as I want to weigh. I want to weigh 125 pounds, and I probably never will. And what's even more depressing is that if I ever did I probably wouldn't stay there, because I'm also a regainer. I can't stand it! I mean it just irks me. I reject my body. I don't want it. I don't want to live in it; I don't want people to see it. I want to be the person who's on the inside who really knows how to dance. I want to dance for heaven's sake. I'd like to be a dancer. I'd like to just give up all of the stuff involving my head, and involving my body and so on, and become a dancer. But I'm not going to. What else do I dislike? I don't know, I think that's the big things. My body represents a possible early death. And it means being socially unacceptable. It means not looking like everybody else. It means not being attractive to men. I want to have the opportunities that I feel other people have, socially and emotionally and economically. I feel that I have to overcome even employers' attitudes to my physical self. Like I'm lucky not to be extremely obese, because extremely obese have a very difficult time getting a job. People are prejudiced against them. Fortunately I don't tend to look as fat as I am, and therefore my overweight has probably not been as much of a problem as the fact that I look much younger that I am. When I was 25 I looked 19. And there wasn't a heck of a lot I could do about it. Even if I wore make-up, I still looked 19. It's partly from being fat and it's partly because we have really fair skin and a certain kind of face that looks young. Always will look young. Even after I'm old I'll look young. But that's okay. I can live with that, although it was really kind of annoying when I was 21. I don't know.

Jean feels that her discomfort with her body was reinforced in a school system that encouraged her intellectual accomplishments to the exclusion of physical and social development. In answer to the question, "What do you regret in your life?" she explains:

> The regrets of course come in here. I feel it's a lack in the school system that doesn't - and this doesn't just have to do with me personally because of course I grew up in a kind of specialized school system - but I think that the school system ought to help kids realize the other parts of them. I was one of those kids that hated phys. ed. and basically have always hated my body. I have never been able to use it; I have never been very skilled with it. And I've always been really self-conscious, so that I know darn well if I wasn't self-conscious I could be rather good at some things. Like I could dance. I have quite a good sense of rhythm. But I get out in the middle of the dance floor and I feel like I'm covered with fire and that everybody in the world is looking at me. And I immediately become completely incompetent. And I think that kids who tend by their nature to be cerebral, ought to be encouraged to learn about their bodies and not to forget their bodies, to develop some skill and some kind of acquaintance with their bodies. I mean I may run into things and bruise myself because I don't think I'm there. I think it's quite true that I don't think I'm there, or I wish I'm not there, and that I don't pay attention. I'm covered with bruises, I'm covered with scratches, and it's because my body is not part of me most of the time. And I think kids ought to be trained to have a feeling for their bodies. Particularly kids like me that didn't. I think that teachers ought to be aware that a kid is deliberately developing only one part of themselves. Some kids develop only the social skills. They don't develop another single thing, just their social skills. And they get really good at certain kinds of things and they never do anything with anything else. And I think it's like, for a kid like me there wasn't any particular need to give me extra help in learning. I was going to do that myself and I did do that. I am very largely self-educated. A kid whose natural bend is to a certain thing is going to manage to do that by themselves. What they need is

> help in the other areas they don't have any real natural connection to. I really strongly feel that. I don't know why I didn't become a phys. ed. teacher, except that I only got this clue very recently and I got it from other people like me who are too specialized and who know they're too specialized and who quite specifically hated phys. ed. – hated the publicness of it, hated always the comparativeness of it, having to do things that they weren't good at and feeling like they were being mortified all the time because they couldn't do things. And it just increased their desire to forget that they had bodies. And now as adults they really regret the fact that they can't do certain kinds of things or that they're physically not very strong or that they have a poor self-image of their whole self. So that's a regret I have, that I didn't develop physical skills and comfort with my body. I really regret that. And I don't know whether you can learn that at the age of 34. I don't know. I mean I'm trying to learn to roller skate but it ain't easy, I can tell you. I'm trying to learn to swim and it isn't easy either.

As was the case with Jean's original decision to attend university, the decision to return for a second degree was made because someone else suggested it. The reason for this seems to be that Jean did not have a clear idea of what she wanted to do with her life. Fortunately for her, by the time she took her second degree she knew how to play the student game, was less anxious, and consequently did well academically. By the time she finished she was feeling relatively secure and capable.

> I went back in the fall into education, at someone else's suggestion. Well, I actually didn't know anybody that was going to university. I had gone to country schools up to and including grade 11 and then grade 12 I had gone one year in a city school. And I had made a few friends but none of them in the university crowd – I mean none of the ones that were headed to university. I mean I knew people, I was aquainted with people, but they weren't my friends and I didn't *know* them. By that time they'd be in third year anyway.
> Actually, I went to work because I didn't know what I wanted to do. And then I went to university because I didn't know what I wanted to do. I think I started out in modern languages. At the end of my first year, I found my geography course the most interesting so I switched into geography and I did my BA in geography. And at the end of my BA I still didn't know what I wanted to do. And I had a BA which obviously wasn't any help, but I'd had kind of a, not perfectly awful time taking it. I love to learn new stuff. That was the only thing that was going well at university, was learning new stuff. And that was okay. So at the end of my third year, I went to Student Counselling and met a guy who was actually a master's student in psychology and was working there as a summer job. And he gave me some tests of this and that, but I have always maintained that if he wasn't a psychologist what he'd really like to be is an English teacher. He told me that what he thought that I should do is to be a teacher and I said, 'Oh, social studies?' And he said, 'No, English.' And I said, 'But my degree is in geography!' Oh well, that didn't matter. And so I thought 'Okay, that's fine.' But that meant I had to take two more years. I had to take a year in which I took a lot more English courses, and then I took my professional year. And that was great! So for two more years my life was soft; I didn't have to worry about what I was going to do; I was going to go to university for two more years. Perfect! So that's what I did. Even though the last thing I wanted to do was teach. But I was willing to believe in the fact that it would help me learn to relate to the rest of the world if I went out there and became an English teacher. That I shouldn't allow myself to be – I don't know, it's easy to project stuff on him because basically I understood what I understood, and it wasn't necessarily what he was saying. I believe that he believed that I should become an English teacher because it would help me. It was important that I learn to relate, that I learn

> to deal with the fact that other people lived in the world and that I was going to have to learn to talk to them. And kind of grapple with social relations and emotional stuff which I had managed to avoid fairly neatly up to that point. Well actually quite messily up to that point. So I went back to university and had quite a good time. By that time I had kind of got it together. I actually have distinction in my B.Ed. Because by that time I'd figured it out, and I wasn't so uptight, and I knew how to study. And I had the system figured and got down on the Dean's list which is just ludicrous considering that I was failing in my second year. It was just that I take a lot longer to adapt than most people. But I adapt eventually if I keep slugging away at it. Things didn't really get better till I was about 25 I don't think, and by that time I had two degrees, had taught school – well, I was teaching school then – I taught school till I was 27.

Having completed a Bachelor of Education degree, the obvious next step for Jean was to teach school. Jean hated it. She decided to stick with it a second year, however, because (once again) someone else believed she should. She found other reasons (a man, and finances) to continue teaching for two more years.

> So then, unfortunately, the axe fell after that. Then I had to teach. And I *hated* it! I stayed for a year because I had promised him that I would, and I asked him at at the end of the year if I could quit and he said, 'No!' He didn't figure that one year was a good enough try – this psychologist who had sort of turned into my friend. He then went back to being a grad student of course, but I used to see him about once a month and I have seen him ever since. I still know he's someone with the Department of Psychology and we still see each other once or twice a year. Well it's more often than that I suppose. But it isn't like that. I actually had sessions with him for the first year or so, and then after a while I just had coffee with him and these days we talk about movies. But I still see him. Anyway, he said that I wasn't giving it a good enough try, so I actually stayed there another year. And then I stayed the third year because of a man and I stayed the fourth year because I had gone to England to go to university between my third and fourth year and I spent so much money I needed to work another year in order to pay it off.

Jean gives two reasons why she left teaching: the students' disinterest in learning English, and her own difficulty with switching between a dictatorial teacher role and that of a concerned, interested friend.

> And then I thought, 'Four years is enough for anybody; I'm getting out of this.' Because I hated classroom teaching. I felt impaled up at the front of that room. I in fact taught from the back most of the time and didn't teach at all quite a bit of the time. I walked around and taught people at their desks and I taught them at noon hour and I gave them advice, mostly. I was starting to get into feminism at that point and I was trying to convince those girls who were growing up in the country and had so many brains, that getting married straight after grade 12 was possibly not the perfect solution to life. And I was notoriously unsuccessful. They all thought I was a loony, basically. Ten years later of course they come up to me and say, 'You know, I should have listened to you.' 'Thanks kid! You should have listened to me then, not now. Don't do this to me.' I talked to other people, particularly English teachers, who just find it an incredibly unrewarding job, partly because kids resist it. I have always believed – I believed then and I believed when my friend told me that I should go into teaching English, that there are many more bad English teachers in the world than there are any other kind. I still think there are a lot of really bad English teachers around, because it is so difficult to be a good English teacher. Quite aside from the difficulty of teaching the subject, is the discipline, because in some ways it's very abstract, and in some ways the

subtleties are what are important. To teach kids these days you've got to have an incredible amount of charisma, because they figure that they've done their share by turning up. They *have to* go to school – and this was particularly true in the country – but they figure that they don't have any more obligation to the process than to just turn up. And the kid who really wanted to learn was actually rare. Still is very rare. I have friends that are still out there teaching and they say it is sad. Because they're not interested. They're not interested! And they're rude! And in English it's: 'My dad's got grade four and look where he is.' You know? 'Why do I have to take this? I've been speaking English all my life.' They resist it. And I wasn't in any position to insist, because I really felt that I didn't know anything about English – I mean I really didn't. I had to learn about the comma, and university does not teach you how to teach English. Least of all, English! Any of the stuff that you learn at university is next to useless at the high school and junior high school level. And you kind of have to figure it all out for yourself.

But in the end it wasn't the material at all – it was the whole – I couldn't deal with the space between my personality and my role. And so on certain days I'd be very dictatorial because I couldn't help it. I had to be because I just didn't want to explain another single thing and I didn't want any lip. I just wanted to be left alone, so they would either do it and shut up or else, you know? 'Just leave me alone and I'll leave you alone, okay?' And on other days, of course, I was quite open and free, because that's the way I am. And I tended to be most dictatorial when I hated being a teacher the most. I was teaching, of course, for a man whose happiest years were in the army. It was not a good situation. If I could have been free all the time because I wasn't burdened with my role as teacher, and the obligation to teach these kids something even if they didn't want to learn it – if I could have just taught them what was interesting, and only taught the ones that wanted to know, and just left the ones that didn't want to know alone, I would have done fine. Or on the other hand, if I could have just continually kept myself in the role of teacher, and teach and give exams and mark them and never relate to the kids on a human level, then I would have been okay. But I couldn't! I tended to switch back and forth just steadily. It's the worst posible thing. Although I figured that it was better than nothing. The kids should understand that the teachers were human beings, even though I never believed that when I was going to school. I always thought they rolled themselves into the closet at night. So it was very difficult. I got along very well with some of the students, particularly the oldest of them, and actually didn't have a bad relationship with all of the kids, except when I was trying to teach them something. All of the rest of the time they sort of liked me. But I just felt constantly – I imagined that they criticized me all of the time and I imagined that they despised me. Which in fact they didn't particularly. They didn't give a shit about me most of the time. But I despised myself. I despised myself for being there and for not being able to handle the situation. Eventually it got better. It wasn't all as agonizing as the first two years, but I knew basically I was only there for Larry, and as soon as I could I was going to get out of it. And I was going to find something else that I could do where it wouldn't be pain all the time. Why should I work at something that is pain? It obviously wasn't improving my character at all. It's a thankless job. And so that's when I went to SAIT. Because I thought that it wasn't that I didn't want to teach – I mean I believe in teaching. It was just that I didn't want to be in the classroom. And I figured that I could use my training and I could use my belief in my ideals some other way by getting out of the classroom. And that's why I'm here basically. It was kind of a rocky road, but that's why I'm doing what I'm doing. It's not that I'm committed to do this for the rest of my life. I'm not. I'm only planning on staying another year.

Jean describes her current job in radio, explaining that she uses her teacher training as well as her technical training for the job. Although she likes the job and the people she works with, and enjoys that her past training fits the job perfectly, she

believes the job does not especially suit her personal talents. She explains that because she isn't an organizer and doesn't work well with people, the administrative aspect of the job doesn't feel very comfortable to her. As was the case when she first entered other new environments, it took Jean considerable time to adjust to her present job. She is aware that although she is not likely to stay long with the job once she has mastered it, it may remain challenging for some time because the content is continually changing.

> Now I'm working in radio and I'm a program developer. It's the first job that I've had that I've used all of my training. I use both the teaching degree and the radio background. Most of my projects were radio. And I believe in the job. I believe in what I do, although working here is not a perfect life. It's incredible bureaucracy, and there's all kinds of things about the corporation that could run a lot better. But the ideal is great. And I have a lot of good friends on the staff and that has been one of the things that keeps all of us there, is that we like each other and that we kind of support each other. And so we all keep doing the job we believe in, even against great odds occasionally. It's a perfect job for my training, but in some way it's not a perfect job for my talents because for one thing, it's an administrative job and there are certain aspects of administration that I am not good at. I'm not a perfect organizer. I'm better with ideas than I am with people. I'm not great about maintaining a schedule and getting things done on time, although I usually manage to come panting in at the last second, about all kinds of stuff. I'm better if I don't have to have and I tend to avoid having big meetings, where I have to chair a big meeting. Because I am very uncomfortable and find it really unpleasant. And occasionally they happen but I go to all kinds of lengths to avoid having that happen because I'm not good at that. I don't have the kind of self-confidence that is necessary to carry off situations where I'm not absolutely sure of my ground. Like all of my other jobs, it took me about a year and a half before I was out of the woods. And for about the first year and a half I couldn't be perfectly sure that I would ever learn how to do it. That I would ever be satisfied with the job that I was doing. And I'm not great at that yet. But I know darn well that by the time I am good at it, I mean *good* at it, I will want to leave. Although it's true, this job, more than many jobs, has a lot more change built into it. There's a lot more kind of challenge built into it because each project really is different. I mean the way you go about it is much the same, but the content is different and the contacts are different and so on. And therefore the job will have lasted me longer than lots of jobs, because there still is stuff to learn. But I can't envision doing it for 20 years. There's too much out there.

In spite of her concern about certain aspects of her job, it is apparent that Jean values it. Asked, "What do you value in your life?" she talked about her job, elaborating on some of its positive aspects.

> My job now is one that uses nearly all of my kinds of background and training, which is kind of a treat. Nothing else that I've ever done has. It's a job which uses my teaching experience and my library experience and my experience in the film and videotape background. And that's always nice. And it's always nice to be in a job where you feel you have some kind of confidence and you're not wasting some of the years you've put in learning bits of that. However, it takes me a long time to feel like I'm really good at a job, and this one was no exception. But I'm now at the stage where I feel like I'm okay and they're not losing any money on me, which is usually the time that I normally quit and go do something else - which is kind of too bad, both for the employer and for me, because it makes life hard really. But one of

> the things about this job, which is to it's credit, is that there's a certain amount of change and challenge built into it, because each project really is different. So the nature of the job doesn't change because each project changes, but there's always something new that you can learn and there's always somebody new that you can meet. And so the job itself has remained more interesting than lots of jobs have. It's not all that routine, and that's nice. I mean a person could actually stick around and do it if they weren't determined to just go off and try something new every second year.

Jean mentioned earlier that one of the pluses of her job is having friends there who are mutually supportive. She also speaks of friends as something she values, explaining that she doesn't make friends easily.

> I acquired friends with quite a lot of difficutly. I think I'm an acquired taste. I mean I really am not someone that interests most people. I don't know whether it is because I am too opinionated – I'm pretty opinionated – or moody, or too what. I don't know what. But I'm not everybody's cup of tea. And I quite cherish my friends because they actually – I mean these individuals, out of all of the people in the world, think I'm okay and enjoy my company and talk to me about stuff and tell me stories and listen to my stories. And we've managed to evolve some kind of relationship, either long or short. I have only two friends that are of long standing and both of them live in Edmonton, which is some kind of record for me – to actually have my two best friends in the same city as I am for several years now. And to be able to talk to somebody without explaining all the background. That's what old friends mean: to be able to just pick up the phone and say, 'I'm having this problem,' and they immediately understand because they know you and they know your history and they know the kinds of things that bother you, and they immediately understand. Whereas with a new friend, no matter how sympathetic they may be, you have to explain everything or they won't get the point. And it's hard to kind of – and maybe they'll never understand because they weren't around when you were going through whatever it was that affects you this time.

Having a job also means to Jean that she can be self-supporting and independent, aspects of herself which she values. She appreciates that she makes a salary large enough to enable her to pay off her debts and be free to do as she pleases.

> And I value my independence, which is partly a factor of the fact that I make enough money from my job that I am completely self-supporting. And I've been self-supporting after a fashion since I was 16, when I first went to work. I make twice as much as I made when I was teaching, which was twice as much as anybody in my family ever made.
> I like the fact that I make quite a lot of money because it means that, God willing and the creek don't rise, in one more year or even as early as September, I could pay off all of my debts, which include Chargex bills, money that I spent when I was unemployed, money that was spent when I moved five times in three years, and my student loans which are still hanging around from graduating in 1974. I've been paying them off a bit at a time and then I went back to school, you see, for two years in 74-75, about five years ago. Yeah right, 74-75 I went back. And I graduated the first time in 70, so I just kind added another big chunk onto them and they'd never been paid off. When I was teaching I paid a chunk, about half or something. So in September I could actually finish it off forever and be completely free and sell everything and run away. It would be a real treat except that I don't have any friends that I could trust to stay in one place for three years so that I can put my stuff in their basement. The last time I went away I left my stuff with somebody, and he moved. And I had to come back from BC on a weekend and move it out of his basement, which really was difficult.

Jean is clear that having a satisfying job is a positive aspect to her life. She also recognizes that she is able to do a good job because she is intelligent. In answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?" she states that she values her intelligence. Not only does being intelligent mean she can do a good job. It means too, that she can be interesting to people and gain the respect of her peers. However, Jean's self-deprecating statement that her intelligence is her *only* asset is also significant.

> Well, that'll be quick. The thing that I value most in myself is my intelligence, and I couldn't do without it. I have always considered it my only asset. Whether that's true or not, it doesn't matter. I have always considered it my only asset. I have always felt that I was physically unattractive and my personality was unattractive and that people couldn't actually take me for long at a time. But if I was going to do anything in the world and if people were going to be interested in me, they were going to be interested in me because of my mind, whatever it is. And it was going to get me whatever I got. And it's been true. I haven't got anywhere out of charm, and I certainly haven't got anything with my looks. But you know, I'll manage. And I manage only because I'm smart enough to get a decent job and to keep it. And it's all I've got, in a way. I know it's not all I've got, but I've always felt like it was all I had, so I put all of my energy into using that to get me what I needed, instead of using anything else.
>
> But my intelligence means that I can have a good job. It means that I can interest people, that is when I talk to them they're interested in me. It means that I have the equipment to learn more and it's helpful in the search for meaning to have a good mind, even if it's a sloppy one like mine. I have quite an undisciplined mind but I have one that kind of works pretty good on its own, so that when I need to do something, all I do is just kind of feed in a whole bunch of stuff and then I go away and worry for a week. And the worrying is very, very nebulous and doesn't usually actually deal with the problem. It deals with the fact that I have to get this thing handed in and I don't know what it is I want to say. And then at a certain point I sit down and I write and it all comes out - whoosh! Just as if somebody's been in there working away on it. And so it's true I have an undisciplined mind, but I have one that works and I don't question it too closely as to how it manages to work. So I suppose a person could work on discipline, but I'm not disciplined enough to work on it. Well that's what that gets me anyway. It gets me the respect of my peers and that's one of my values, right? I want people whose opinions I value to think that I'm okay - that I'm interesting or that I'm smart or that I'm capable or that I'm whatever. I want people to respect me, but I'm basically only interested in people that I respect respecting, and the rest of them - okay. But I'm sure that everybody else feels the same. The respect of your peers is a really important thing. Okay, so that's what it gains me.

Pushed to reflect further on what she values in herself, Jean discusses her sense of humor, her moral values, her belief in striving to achieve, etc. However, she does not speak of these qualities with much confidence. Rather, she tends to qualify her attributes, explaining that although she is aware of her potential, her fears often get in the way.

> And I don't think I could manage without a sense of humor. I don't think that I would have gotten through all of these years – and there's times that it was pretty much submerged – but it was always kind of lurking around in there. So it gives me an ability, it gives me two things. It gives me certain kinds of social approval. People think I'm funny and so they sit around and listen to me when I'm talking, and that's always nice. And so that's one real use for a sense of humor I find. And of course the other use is that it manages you to survive. I mean it helps you manage to survive in an impossible world. Because the world isn't going to get any better and if you can't stand it, well then, too bad. You have to learn to stand it. You have to say, 'Well, okay, so what's funny about that?
>
> So, okay, so that's two things. So what have I got besides my sense of humor and my intelligence? Hmmm. Well I don't know, I think that I have quite a lot of old–fashioned moral values. I think that I'm loyal, I think that I am loving, I think that I am essentially kind, or at least I'm too cowardly not to be kind. I think I'm kind. I believe in being hard working, although I'm not always hard working. I'm sort of sporadic about it. But I believe in application and striving and I think I manage those things. I used to think that I was lazy but in fact I'm only somewhat lazy and a lot of times when I might be accused of laziness what I am is I'm really just afraid to do something and so I don't do it. It isn't that I couldn't do it, it isn't that I don't even want to do it. Of course I want to do it, I just don't want to start it. So that's one of the values in which I am ambivalent, because on the one hand I am lazy, on the other hand I'm not lazy. I'm more fearful than lazy. Sometimes – I mean I'm not idle – There are times when I want to lay around and read a book; there are times when I literally just don't want to do anything. And then I enjoy not doing anything. But those times are much rarer than the times that I'm determined to lay around and read a book because I don't want to get up and do something. And that isn't laziness, that's avoidance. And that's much more common. I think that in fact if I could get rid of all of that other stuff, all that fear and fear of failure and rejection and everything, that I wouldn't seem lazy at all.
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> What else have I got to value? I mean *am* I that I value? Well, I don't know. What else could a person need? I'm smart, I'm funny, I've got energy, somewhat counteracted by all my other problems. Oh yeah. I'm loyal and warm and I'm generous and kind – yeah, I'm those things. I really think I am. When it's all operating, when I'm not just locked in a closet someplace, I have all of those things. And I use them and I think they're valuable and I'm glad I have them and I think that I'm actually the sort of person that people want to like. When I'm okay, when I'm open, I am the kind of person that people want to like. The problem is that I'm not open all the time and so it's hard for people to know that it's all in there. It's too bad.

That Jean feels unable to act or adapt to change due to her own fears, and consequently feels powerless, is evidenced in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerless?". She explains that this can occur both at work and in her social and personal life.

> Same kind of thing – when I can't do it. When I'm in a set of circumstances and either I can't adapt to the needs that are required of me, or I am incapable of doing whatever it is, I need to change circumstances to fit whatever it is I am trying to achieve and I can't change them. There is that. I experience more powerless over my own problems than I do over external problems. Like I feel that if I could beat fear, I could beat everything. Because then I would be able to adapt. If I could beat fear I could adapt and then I wouldn't have to experience powerlessness. I experience powerlessness when I can't make myself do something I should be doing, that I feel that I ought to be doing and that I would have benefit from doing, either at work or socially or emotionally or anything. When I think I should be doing something and I can't make myself do it, even though it's the obvious thing to be doing, that's when

> I feel powerless. Because how do you make yourself do something? It really is the brick wall. You can try to trick yourself, but I'm smarter than that. It's not having any solutions, because *you're* what's the problem. It's hard to have a solution if you're the problem. That's mostly what makes me feel – I mean that's my most – that's what concerns me more. Because basically, if it's something external and I can't do it, I can always say, 'Well, I didn't want to do it anyway. Good-bye!' If some circumstance is making it impossible to do something, well then I've done everything I can, but it's just as long as I've done everything that I can. And I can't make myself do it– I think that's probably the most important thing.

Asked, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerful?" Jean describes how she has come to feel more at ease with and more in control of herself at work. She defines what power means and doesn't mean to her, identifying power in terms of her own ability to act rather than due to her position or knowledge. Seeing herself as someone who generally has difficulty adapting to new situations and taking control, however, Jean states that she feels powerless more than she feels powerful.

> Most of the time I don't experience myself as being powerful. Most of the time I feel powerless against all kinds of stuff. Well, I feel powerful when I feel in control of whatever situation I am in. That is, when I know what I'm doing and I know that the next time somebody asks a question, I'm going to know the answer. And when I know what's going to happen and that I'm going to be able to handle it. When I know that nothing is likely to happen, in whatever way, that I'm not going to be able to deal with, that's when I feel powerful. That can happen at work, and it can happen socially, although it doesn't happen very often. The opposite tends to happen more often socially. These days at work it's happening more. I feel more like I am in control of my destiny at work than I used to. And that I can actually give directions and believe that they're the right directions to be giving – because I have quite a responsible job and these days now I feel that I can almost handle the responsibility. And that my decisions are going to be the right decisions or at least they're decisions that I'm going to be able to justify, even if they aren't the right decisions. I am going to be able to at least say, 'Well, it was reasonable that I do this, even though it turned out to be the wrong thing.' And I won't feel like I've made a terrible mistake. I mean I may have made a mistake, but at least I'll have made a justifiable mistake. So I mean that's what power means to me. It means being able to either control my circumstances, or knowing that I'll be able to adapt to the circumstances and handle whatever happens. And the ability to be adaptable I find really important. And I'm not particularly adaptable and I have to kind of work at it. So when I feel that I have a situation in hand and that I can adapt to things that happen, then I feel powerful, because it's not something that I do well.
> My power mostly has to do with myself. I don't tend to go in for or even think in terms of manipulation, for instance. I don't think in terms of having power over other people. It's not something that I would even try to learn, short of getting people to help, to do what I need them to do in terms of work. That's kind of a different category. Because I assume that if a person is working with me or for me, they're doing it for a reason: either because it's their job or because I'm paying them to do it. And so it isn't a matter of power, it's a matter of contract and it's a matter of mutual responsibilities. So that's not a thing of power. And I don't think in terms of personal power, of convincing people to do things for me. I'd sooner hire them to do them for me. And it's not that I don't ever make an effort to convince people of things. I do! If there's something that I really believe in, I will make an effort to convince them. But I don't ever think of that in terms of power. I just think of it as something that I needed to do and if it worked, it worked, and if it didn't, it didn't. I don't have a need for that kind of power over people –

that is, the need to kind of cause people to do things that I want them to do without promising them anything in return. That's not something that means anything to me personally. All power means to me is being able to adapt to circumstances, being able to manage in circumstances where something is required of me and I need to be able to do it and I can do it.

The fears Jean often refers to obliquely, are discussed directly in her answer to the question, "What do you resent or regret in your life?". She identifies her fears of failure and of rejection, fears which have affected her throughout life and which continue to do so.

Okay, well the regrets are easy. I have millions of regrets. But my primary regret has to do with wasting time. I feel I've wasted 98 percent of my life, just through fear of any kind of commitment, and commitments of all kinds. The fear of trying things at every level has prevented me from trying things, even though what I really wanted to do was to find out about things, was to get to know people, was to start a new job, was all of those things. I found it hateful and painful and tended to put off as long as possible. It's very difficult for me to go out on a limb in any way. I once figured out some years ago – it was one of the times when the light went on – I once figured out that the reason I had probably never failed at anything was that I had never tried anything that I had even the remotest possiblity of failing at. I only tried things that I knew I could do. Which is why I got bored with them after a while. It was why they were not satisfying to me, was because I hadn't really, I hadn't put anything on the line. It wasn't that it was easy. I mean I probably made it really hard for myself, but it was always possible. I've never tried to do anything that I didn't think was possible. I guess it would be stupid to do so, but it had to be pretty much a sure thing. And I've missed a lot of opportunities. I've missed opportunities with people, I've missed opportunities with jobs, I've missed opportunities with time. I mean now time means a lot more to me. There is a really good possibility that I'll live another 10 years, and those are the only 10 years I'm going to get. Mortality doesn't usually come to you when you're 34, but it has come to me and I resent all those years. I resent myself for choosing not to use that time, for choosing to waste that time and know darn well I was wasting it, waiting for something to happen. Waiting for the new day to dawn, waiting to know what I was going to do, waiting until it was the last possible second to finish something or to start something or whatever, until I had to. Until I was forced by circumstances to get out there and do whatever it was. I resent all of the missed opportunities that I missed through cowardice, and cowardice is at the bottom of it. Fear is at the bottom of it. It's the fear of failure. It's the fear of rejection. The fear of rejection is very strong in me. And I don't know where it came from. I have always been like that. I have always been timid, and I've always had to force myself to do things, particularly in a social context. I had so few social skills when I went to university – and by that time I had been working for two years – I was almost incapable of speaking to a stranger. I didn't have a single date through my entire BA. Of course I was overweight, but I was also unhappy, and apparently I was not a particularly nice person to know. It's a wonder that I actually had one friend. I had one friend in those days. God knows why! Who would choose to be with somebody that was that negative all the time? Except that sort of about once a month I was also hysterically funny. Once a month I'd be high, but it wasn't often, it was infrequent. So it amazes me that in fact I have friends who actually started in that time. And I know they started. It's recently been told to me – well, because I asked about that – that in those days I wasn't very likeable. And therefore, why do I have friends who are left from that period– I have at least one friend – because I was really withdrawn? And she said, well, there were certain times that I would just put myself in the way of people. I would just go and be with them, basically whether they invited me or not. Because I needed it. Even though once I was there I didn't do

anything about it. I was just kind of there. Like a lump. I don't know. I don't know how you get beyond that. I mean I'd sort of like to get beyond that but – well there's nothing you can do about the regret. I mean you just try and kind of forget it. What do you do – 34 years ago and good–bye? Next! I regret everything I've wasted. Not just time, but opportunities, money. I regret money I've wasted. I have wasted lots of money I could have used, but I'm just irresponsible basically. Oh, the other thing that I regret is I don't have any ability to take care with things. I don't have a proper attitude of maintenance. Like the dripping taps. I could fix those taps but I haven't done it. I could wax the floor so that it wouldn't get dirty so fast. I could fix little things on the car so that it wouldn't break down completely. But I don't do those things. I wait for things to fall apart and then I feel sorry because they've fallen apart. That kind of thing. It's paying attention to things. It's like I run into things and I constantly bruise myself on stuff. It's not being aware of the consequences of the little things. Just not paying any attention. I regret that. And it bothers me. I think it's a flaw in my character.

Being fearful and being inhibited by her fears is a serious problem for Jean. That she is aware of this, and doesn't like it, but feels unable to change, is evidenced in her response to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?". In the following exerpts she makes the connection between her fears and her early family life.

Well, I think that the biggest problem is that I'm a coward. Like I'm afraid; I'm afraid of all kinds of stuff. And the fear more or less puts the brakes on all of the potential that I actually have. I think I've got quite a lot of potential and most of it I don't do anything with quite a lot of the time, and I don't do anything with it because I'm afraid. I feel threatened by everything that it's possible to feel threatened by and it paralyzes me. I can't, I don't achieve anything, and then I feel guilty because I'm not achieving anything, and then I'm paralyzed by the guilt. And it's fear, guilt, fear and guilt. Sometimes I never get anything done for days and weeks and years on end. No wonder! My father was a shy man and my mother was just so burdened with everything. No wonder we were fearful! But the thing is, that was then and this is now. A person's got to get past it somehow. But I don't know how. I mean you can't be marked for life. You may be marked but you should be able to rise above it. You should realize that those were the circumstances then and it had nothing to do with now. I should be able to realize that the circumstances that caused the fear had nothing to do with me and my possibilities. It just had to do with the circumstances. And that here I am and I have the possibilities and why don't I use them? Why do I have to be bound by all of that?

I feel so clumsy. I feel so unskilled. I feel like the combination of the isolation of the farm and then the isolation of my teenage years which was self–imposed, totally self–imposed – like I feel, and I have always felt, that I can never catch up. That the fact that I didn't date when I was 13, and that I didn't learn basically the hard way all of the things that people learn socially when they are young, means that I can never catch up. That people are always going to look at me and say, you know, 'Just got off the farm last week?' You know? I'm never going to be sophisticated. I'm never going to make it. I'm never going to catch up. I'll always be behind because I didn't learn to dance when I was 12. Because I still can't dance. And how can a person who's 34 not be able to dance? Or not know what to do in such and such a circumstance, or not know how to behave in these. I mean you don't still blush when people speak to you when you're 34. But I do. Because I just can't somehow learn all those things, whatever they are. And of course being afraid doesn't help me learn them. Because for one thing I avoid them, I avoid new experiences that will be hard. And for another thing, my mind shuts off. I mean whatever skills I do have fly out the window as soon as I am in a threatening situation. So I can't catch up. It's impossible! I'm always going to be straight off the farm, aged 12, the only kid in school who wears

braided hair and doesn't have any clothes like anybody else.
I don't know. Most of the things I dislike about myself come from the fears, come from the fact that I'm a coward. I'm a coward in many ways. Like you do a lot of little things in your life that you feel badly about afterwards - yeah, it's going around - and you wish you hadn't done them. You feel kind of cheap. Everybody does those things and they are usually because it's easier to do such and such or not to do such and such, than it is to do it or not do it. And so you take the line of least resistance, even though you end up doing something that you would not normally, morally choose to do. And that's just cowardice, and certain kinds of laziness. It's not wanting to make any difficulty for yourself, so you don't go out of your way to do certain things. And so, yeah, I've had a certain amount of that.

Although Jean feels secure and capable in her current job, liked and supported by friends, there remains a sense of dissatisfaction in her life. She wants adventure although this would be a struggle, wrought with fear. Further, Jean is not clear about the kind of adventure she wants, only that she is looking for something and feels some urgency about it.

What I want is adventure. Although I'm terrified of adventure. I go off on expeditions and I'm just as likely to alternate between forcing myself to go out and do things that make me very uncomfortable, and sitting in the hotel thinking about going out and doing things. Because it is not easy to travel alone. It is not easy! There are some things you don't tend to do. Like I was just in London, and if I would have been with somebody I would have been much more daring. I'd have done certain kinds of things, like I'd have gone to all-night jazz places and stuff like that - seen other parts of the city. But I did the same things that I always do. I walked around for miles and looked at stuff, went to a few plays, shopped a bit, looked at museums - the same things I always do because these are the things you can do when you're by yourself. And I often thought that I ought to go to someplace with somebody, and maybe I would see some of the rest of the life. But I've never found anybody to go with. Anyway. So the next year on this job is not for the job's sake, it's for the money. I'm planning on getting out of debt for the first time since childhood I think - paying off all my personal and student loans and getting free. I'm gonna store all of my stuff, such as there is, and do something: I'm either going to go to England to look for a job, or I'm going to join CUSO and go the third world, or I'm going to go to India and become an orange person, or I'm going to do something. I'm going to go away because I won't owe anybody anything for the first time ever. And I could have paid it off before, but I'm extravagant. I like stuff and I like to do things and I'm not a very good money manager and I never have been. If I have no money then I do without, and if I have money I spend it. But I can't kind of manage it, so that I come out at the end with it all solved. So that's why it's taken me this long. If I'd been really single-minded, if I had ever been single-minded about anything, I wouldn't have the problems I do today. But if I had been single-minded I could have been out of debt before this. But in another year I'll be 35, and that's something of a milestone for a woman. You feel you've got to get going on your life, and considering my family, I could have five years of life left. As little as that. Or less! I had a brother who died when he was 29, and I just had a cousin die at 34. So there's no guarantee that I'll live long. So I should get busy and stop wasting time working. And yet it's not the only thing that I want, naturally. If there were ever only one thing that I wanted I would probably get it. But I've never been able to close any of the doors. I've always had to have all the options open because I might any second figure out what it is I want and then I could go for it. But I've never really figured it out, ever. I'm still looking. And I'll probably always look; I'll probably never be satisfied. My brother William who died was never satisfied. He always looked, and that was all the time he

had.

At other times Jean feels that she'd like to have a baby. She has dismissed the idea of having one of her own, seeing the difficulties involved in such an undertaking.

> There are many other days when all I really want is babies, but you can't have a picnic, you just can't have everything. I have various friends who are having their babies now and I really envy them. God! They're so entertaining, you know, just watching their little selves develop. There's always something new. They're better than a play! And they all say the same thing, they say that there's just nothing like it. Once you've got them and you realize that every day they're different and they just develop, well you know that. So. The trouble is that those first five years where they're so interesting, that's one thing, but then you have the next 20 years when they're still around, becoming independent, and you've got to get on with the rest of your life. I don't know. There was a time when I considered having a child, and I very quickly realized that it is too difficult to have a child on your own, if you choose to have a child on your own. People can do it but it's the hard way. Why should you do it the hard way? The easy way is a two-parent family. And there's no getting around it, it's economically very difficult for a single parent. Very difficult! I mean for a couple of years in there you're just not working, and babies are expensive. It's not fair! Why should a kid have only one parent when he could have had two, or she could have had two, if they'd bothered? So I luckily got past that stage and now I wouldn't have a child on my own unless it happened that way, as it does to all kinds of people. That door is still open for a couple more years, but not very much longer. Because I am 34 and there's a point – even now, considering that I could die in five to ten years, it's really not a very good idea to have a baby. Because there the poor child is, being raised by somebody.

The meaning to Jean of adventure is made more clear in her partial answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?". Adventure, it seems, may be the method to finding meaning.

> I have two main values. One is the search for meaning. Not only to search for knowledge, which I incessantly prowl around after, not in a very regular fashion, but the search for meaning, the reason why one should bother at all. It doesn't seem to me that it's possible that people should exist for no reason. They say I'm not old enough for existentialism; I don't know whether I ever will be old enough for existentialism. I believe that there has to be a reason and I'm going to find out what it is if it's the last thing I do. I don't like to think that I won't find out, but I think that's probably true, that I won't find out. But as long as I keep looking for it, I figure that it'll help to pass the time.

Jean explains that she also values love. However, she has seen her two main values as mutually exclusive – she could either go off on an adventure to search for meaning or she could stay home and nurture her connections to others. And until now at least, she has put most of her energy into her search for meaning.

> The other main value in my life is love, which includes the love for my family and the love for my friends and the love for mankind, personkind, human kind, dogs, cats, trees – I'm especially big on trees – and the whale of course. But I think that in my past life I have really emphasized the one almost to the exclusion of the other. I have spent a lot of time looking for something that I didn't know what it was. But after I had spent a length of time doing one thing I would stop and go and do something else, having exhausted what I felt were the possibilities of the thing I was working on,

> whether it was high school or my first job or university or my second job or my next job or whatever. Yanking out my roots and throwing myself off in search of adventure or meaning. But always on my own. Always as an individual. Always trying to prove something. And I haven't, until the last few years, made any kind of effort to seek for the other. Which I still consider a value. I always considered it a value in an academic sort of way, when I didn't think it was for me. I thought that it was for the rest of the folks. And it was always second, it was always, 'Well, I'll look after the first value, that is, search for knowledge and the search for interest and the search for meaning, and the rest will come later.'

Jean explains that to her, independence means being free of other's expectations and being able to look after herself, whereas dependence means being obligated and bound or being a burden to others.

> If there's anything we've missed, then I can't think of what it is. Because really that pretty much covers it. Those seem to be the things that have been a continuing thread in my life. The need for independence, of being free of other people's expectations and needs, being able to look after myself. The need to be able to look after myself has always been really strong. I don't object, I mean I would much sooner be in a position where I had to look after somebody else than to be in a position where somebody else had to look after me. I would find that much more intolerable. That I can look after myself means that I am a fully functioning member of society. It means that I am a human being. I know that some people are dependent because they have to be. I am glad that I am not dependent because I have to be. And I am really glad that I am not in the position where I am forced by my circumstances or forced by my limitations, to depend on other people's good will or money or support or assistance. I certainly am just glad that I don't need that. That frees me! And not only that, it gives me respect for myself because I think that I require that of myself. I require being able to maintain myself in all ways. And also it frees me to be able to help others. But it doesn't obligate. I mean I don't feel it obligates me to help others, but at least it frees me to help others. I don't have to be a burden, I can give a hand sometimes, although I don't tend to spread that very far. It's probably reprehensible but that's the truth. I am both loyal and helpful to my friends and I would do pretty much anything that they asked if they asked me, and quite a few things that they didn't ask me. But I don't tend to go out of my way to volunteer to help people that I don't know. I suppose because you can only spread yourself so thin, you know? I don't have that need to serve that some people have. I am primarily serving myself, because it binds you to them and it binds them to you.

Leaving her home base and going off on an adventure is becoming more complicated for Jean of late. It means that the possesions she has collected since settling into her own place have to be stored, for example. She contemplates that having a family would make her life even more complicated.

> And so I have the same problem: what am I going to do with my stuff when I go off to find an adventure? This stuff which is what I use to make my nest, becomes an albatross basically when I want to go away. And I often think about it because I love it, and I want it to be here when I come back. I fully plan to come back. I don't expect to be out of the country longer than five years. You know, unless something very strange happens. But I really don't, even in my strangest imaginings, I don't expect to be away for more than five years. What do you do with all of your stuff, including the 36 boxes of books, for five years? So! So that's one of the places where independence breaks down. I need this stuff because it is me. I have collected it painfully

> over all these years. I have tried not to collect stuff. In fact the furniture is really recent; it's only in the last 2 years that I've had almost any furniture at all. Mostly I just had the 8 million books and the bookshelves. But things have kind of accrued and I like them. I now have places that seem like my place: that seem like I live here, instead of just being temporary, just travelling through, which is what I felt like for many, many years. Like I had no place. So it's nice to have it, but on the other hand, what do you do with it when what you want, when the other thing you want is to be completely free of it? Be like the bird: everything that you've got is on your back and you just trot off in the search of whatever. And have this Zen-like life where you're not burdened with possessions, but you've got your possessions of course, secretly stashed someplace where you can go back and get them. I often thought that I'm not truly committed to the Zen-like life. But it attracts me, I mean it attracts me more than other options attract. It attracts me actually more than riches and comfort - having the $200,000 home and the real art and all of that stuff. That doesn't attract me much at all, because mostly I just think of it as more stuff. So I don't know. Then you know people, that whole thing. I know that if, for instance, I had married and had a child, I would have acquired stuff like everybody else. But the whole thing would have been part of the burden, part of the thing that - the loss of independence. You know you can take a child along, but can you take along a tricycle and a bed and all of those things that children have that come along with them? That's the problem. And you add them one at a time until you don't realize that you've got this boxcar full of stuff that you acquired along with the child and the husband and you know. So back to the Zen-like life. I imagine people with families often really fantasize about being free of all of it. For an hour or two.

Nevertheless, Jean values her search for meaning. Asked, "What do you value about yourself?" she explains that she values her energy. This she sees as important both for her search for meaning and as a factor in making her attractive to others. As in the case with other aspects of herself that she values, however, Jean feels that her energy is inhibited by her fears.

> And I value energy. I think that it's necessary in the search for meaning. I think that you've only got so much time so you should be using it and that also I think that energy is self-generating. I think that the less you do the less you want to do. In fact I know that because I have experienced that. And the more you do the more energy you've got. It kind of generates itself. Also I think that energy in the form of zest is attractive. I think people are attracted to people who have that kind of, you know - it's all going on and we're involved in it and it's all so interesting. And I think people are interested in that kind of person. I find and always have found energy really, what's the word for it? When I'm around people with energy I kind of get - it communicates itself to me. I have a friend in England who is just so stimulating. Whenever I'm around her I find myself busier than I ever am any other time, just because there's just stuff going on all the time and she is just so interested in everything. And you know, you just find you get dragged into the wake. And I find that really stimulating. I find that if I am allowed to, I'll kind of run down. When I have to provide all the push myself, I kind of run down. And I find that if you have people around you that are energetic to work off, you can achieve a lot more and you'll enjoy it a lot more. So I value that. Yeah, I wouldn't mind more of it but I think that I have quite a bit. I think that I would have more if I had less fear. I mean I think that I would be able to call on it more. It's all down there of course, rolling around and giving me headaches and making me tired and so on, and if I could get it free, I think I'd find I had an awful lot of it. Because when I am happy or things are going well, I can work very fast and really quite effectively, and this all kind of gets lost in the middle of other stuff. But it's there, you know, and if I could be

> on all the time or even most of the time, I'd set the world on fire I think. It's too bad, you know that I'm just, that I get these chains. That's life!

Jean describes a process she went through over the two days between our interview sessions, when she talked with friends about her next plans for adventure. She came to a new understanding: she realized that she had other options which could include both an adventure and maintaining her relationships with others. She could go off on an adventure for just a short time and return to her friends, or she could take a friend with her.

> And it seems that, I was quite interested to figure out in the last day or two, that I have been recently in the last few months, planning – planning to do the same thing over again. That is, get out of debt, quit my job and go off in search of another thing to do – another job or another pursuit. And ostensibly it's adventure, but mostly just a new trial, a new thing. And I also know from experience that it takes me about a year and a half at my new thing to recover from the shock of having thrown myself off, out of the nest once again, to start all over by myself. And it occurred to me that maybe it wasn't such a good idea after all. And I had been talking around this with a couple of friends lately, and a couple of people have recently suggested to me – not that I ever really listen to anybody – that it might not be such a good idea to go away completely. I mean, why was I doing it really? Only just yesterday I thought, 'Well maybe that's not what I need. Maybe what I need is a change? Maybe I need a couple of months to go off and do something and be somewhere else and have a good time, or have a bad time or whatever, but to be someplace completely different, and then come back where my friends are. Instead of going away and trying to make new friends once again.' And you know, I have a large long distance bill. I mean I don't lose all of my old friends and I don't lose them forever, because my friends move around as well. But it isn't necessary to go away forever, or even for two years and then two years someplace else and two years someplace else. It is necessary to go away for a few months because I need that. I need to go and see what's out there. But my other option is to take somebody with me so I have a little stability instead of no stability, instead of starting over completely. I'm sort of prepared to consider that as well. If there were someone that I was interested in having share my next adventure, or if there were someone who was interested in sharing my next adventure, that I figure I could stand, it might be a really good idea to take somebody with me. So in the last one day I seem to have evolved slightly. It's been kind of coming together. I had a couple of conversations since the first interview, and a certain amount of just thinking about it, and last night was when I actually thought, 'Well I do have another option – my other option is to go off and do something and come back. Not stay away forever.' I mean I can quit the job if it comes down to they won't give me two or three months leave of absence. I can quit! But I could still come back and find a different job. I don't really want to work in Edmonton, but my friends live here, you know? Although I wouldn't mind coming back and living in Calgary, which is fairly close. And I like Calgary, I mean, not the city, but I like being near the mountains. When I'm living in Calgary I still find my friends accessible. And I have some real good friends in Calgary from the time I lived there. So! Anyway, maybe I'll manage not to make the same mistake over.

Jean gained another insight when speaking with her friends between interviews. She made the connection between stability in her life and weight loss, a connection which reinforces the need for other options such as the ones she considered above.

> But the question, I've been kind of going around it in a couple of directions. The other direction has to do with the fact that on two periods of my life I have managed to lose a lot of weight. Over the long grind of about five years, and almost immediately after I lost it or during the period that I was at my lightest and generally at my highest, was the time that I went off in search of adventure and left it all behind. And I really left it all behind! And then of course with the stress of starting over someplace else, I gained all the weight back over a period of months or years. And someone said to me – I was talking about this the other day, I was really distressed about the fact that I never seem to learn anything – and she said, 'Well, the next time you lose a whole bunch of weight, stay put.' And I thought, 'What a novel idea!' But the trouble is, I'm usually in such a good mood when I have lost a whole bunch of weight, that I want to try something new. So it's hard. And that brought up the idea of maybe taking somebody with me, and to maintain some portion of the stability of the old life. Because it's the stability that causes me to lose weight. It's having a regular life and eating meals at normal times and having certain friends over and not eating in restaurants all the time. That's how I manage to lose weight, is kind of regularizing my life. And usually that all goes out the window for at least two years after I make a major move. Oh well.

Jean believes that it is time for her to switch her priorities – to set aside her search for meaning and instead to nurture her relationships with friends and become more at ease with people. She's not sure how she'll do this, however, because she often prefers to be alone.

> So anyway, I think I should stop working on the first one, which because it's so natural for me to constantly be trying to learn new stuff of one kind or another, that I don't need to pursue it. It's going to happen anyway. And I should actually make some effort to pursue the other value, since it's much harder for me. It's much harder for me, it's much more difficult. I have to dare a lot more and I'm really very bad at it, having started late. I have always been really solitary, quite aside from the fact that I may be really lonely and I may regret my life. The fact is I have been solitary since I was a baby. Even in a big family I've always been solitary, and it may be that that's my fate. I just could be that that's the way it's gonna be, and I should learn to accept that. But even so, that's no excuse for not making any effort. I mean even the most solitary people that I know have friends they enjoy. But the solitary nature of them causes them to be happy whether those friends are there or not. They're happy when the friends are there because they enjoy their friends, but they're also happy, or at least satisfied, or at least doing things that satisfy them, when the friends aren't there, because they are by nature solitary. And it could be that that's the way it is and that I shouldn't hanker after having somebody around full time, or people around me full time, because it probably isn't the way I am meant to live. Because I never have lived like that, even when I had a family that I liked very well living around me all the time. I didn't connect myself to them very much. Only on certain days. The rest of the time I think they were fairly glad that I didn't, because I was very moody. So I don't know. But I still think that it's worth making some kind of – I mean actually, actively thinking about making an effort to develop some skills at being with people. I mean just literally being with them, and not constantly feeling the various emotions I feel when I have to be with people a lot. I find that I'm accustomed to being alone, and if I have somebody stay over I'm usually good for one day, and on the second day I want to be alone very badly. And if they stay for very long at all I become quite sullen and impossible. I mean I try, but I find that it's distressing for me to have people around me 24 hours a day. If I'm really busy and I'm going out every single night, within a week I just become quite crazy. And I have to spend a day in bed reading science fiction or something.

Reflecting on her past, Jean explains the connection between her search for meaning and her need for independence. She is conscious of a recent change in her definition of meaning. Whereas she once thought she would eventually find one ultimate answer, she now believes she is involved in a process which will consist of gaining small insights over time, like the ones she has just gained.

> Well, I think historically, certainly, the search for meaning and the need for independence are very closely bound up. Like I couldn't say which one was most important because they've both been very important. And the connections with my friends and my family have always been secondary. Not that I would in theory want it to be, but that's the way it has been. The independence has been more important, and the search for whatever I'm searching for, whatever that mysterious thing is. I think that I want a sign, I want to know that I've arrived. For a long time what I wanted – and I just realized that I haven't thought of this for some years – but in the old days what I really wanted was a sign that I had arrived somewhere, that I had figured out something. What I wanted was to have some sort of sign that this was it and I could get busy on it, you know? And I haven't actually thought about that for years, or at least for a couple of years. Now I sort of realize that I'll always go on looking, and that just as long as I get some satisfaction out of what I'm doing now, it doesn't matter that I never find it. Because it isn't, and I realize that it isn't. I think I even realized that that isn't all that important, and that I don't think that I will find peace. I think I'll just keep on looking. But I think that I'll learn things along the way. Like I feel like I've learned some things the last couple of days. And it's those occasions when I feel that I've learned something, that a light went on, however weird they may be, that's what I'm after, is those occasions in my life when the light goes on. So there's never a big light, that's okay, just as long as I get enough little lights in a regular enough fashion to keep me going, to keep me looking. That's all I need. I think that independence and the search for meaning will always be primary. I think that I'll try and bring up the other one.

Finally, Jean speaks in greater detail about how she does relate to others and in what ways she would like to change her behaviour. The issue of fear arises again.

> I really think that I will try and improve my ability, my skills in relating to people. And I'll try not to reject the opportunities that I get. I'll try to at least notice the opportunities that I get, to work on that. Because I haven't much at all. It's not that I'm not glad of my friends. I am glad of my friends. But I don't think I, except for my very closest friends, I don't nurture them. And I certainly don't look for new possiblilities to nurture. There's too much. It's really very hard for me. It's always been hard and it's always been easier to just make do with what I've got. I mean I don't know, maybe a person doesn't need zillions of friends. Maybe they need a few. I mean I don't want zillions of friends, but I think that – oh, I don't know. I mean, at the moment I've got more friends than I've had ever, I think really. I have several friends at work who are not like old friends but they are like people who are kindred spirits in certain ways, that I can talk to easily. And we don't just talk about work and our diets, we can talk about other stuff as well. I think that friendship isn't the only thing. I think that it's possible to learn to relate to people that you don't know well in a more honest fashion, so that you get more out of even the more fleeting connections that you make with people. Instead of most of our dealings with other people are really superficial. And mine are probably more superfical than others just because it's easier that way. And I think that it's easy to encourage other people to have superficial connections with people. I think it's worthwhile to kind of make an effort to try to be straighter with people, try to be more honest with people, try to get to talk

about real stuff. In fact, I mean it's possible to talk about real stuff without being threatening I guess, but let's hope everybody else in the world isn't as easily threatened as I am.

Learning to be comfortable with people is not an easy task for Jean. To begin with, she is not comfortable with herself and how she assumes she appears to others, as we have already seen. Further, she is uncomfortable with social expectations imposed on women – that in order to be successful they must be loved. In this sense she believes it is easier to be a man and wishes she was.

> I would rather have been born a man, because it's easier. It is easier! Not necessarily more fun, but definitely easier. And incidentally, my friends don't particularly agree with this theory of mine, because we had kind of an argument about it at work. They don't agree, but I maintain that men only have to be successful at work. In order to be successful men have to work and to do well at it. But in order to be successful, women have to be loved, and it's much harder to arrange being loved than it is to arrange working . It's much easier to get a job than to become loved. And therefore, failure, in terms of womanness is much more dangerous – I mean destructive. Though as I say, my friends don't agree with me. They think that men who fail at what they believe they're supposed to be doing, which is working and becoming successful at making money, is very destructive for them. But I just maintain it's much rarer – that men don't as often feel failures in their lives as women do. And it's possible that most women don't. It's possible that I'm just projecting, because I feel like a failure as a woman. And that they don't actually think they're being failures as long as they've achieved marriage or achieved motherhood or achieved whatever women feel they ought to achieve. I mean they don't also have to achieve work. I have to achieve work. I mean I have to make it in a man's world and I still have to feel that I haven't been successful because I haven't made it in the women's world. Even though I don't believe in that. I mean, even though I'm convinced that that's not the way it ought to be, I still believe that that's the way it is. Well, a person tends to surround themselves with people who don't judge them like that. Like my friends. By this time of course, I have a set of friends with whom I have very good relationships, and whom I've known for some years or some not so long, but with whom I have a lot in common – the women at work and a couple of good friends that I have. And those people don't judge me; they judge me by the way I am.

The people whom Jean feels do judge her as a failure are her family back home, particulary her aunts.

> But it's all those other people. Mostly having to do with cousins and uncles and aunts, who are all back there in Saskatchewan and who I refuse to go and visit, even thought I love them, because I feel that they are judging me. I may be projecting a little; I don't know about those aunts. They would never actually say to me that they felt that it's very nice that I have a great job and that I have a business card and that I make $24,000 or $22,000 a year or whatever it is I make. But in fact they still think I'm a failure because their daughters are married and I'm not. And then I'm one of the few women – well I'm one of the few women in the family, but I'm practically the only woman in the family, I *am* the only woman in my family, of my age, who is not married. And I've always been the only one that was not married. All of the rest of them are married. Except the kid and they're getting married this summer. They're all very jolly when I'm there and they're interested in my job, but they still think that I was a bit of an oddball, that I have always been an oddball and that because I'm an oddball I'm not married. And it doesn't help to say, 'But does it matter what they think?' It does matter! Face it, it matters! It

> doesn't help to say, as I've always said, 'But I don't want to be married; I don't believe in marriage; I reject the marriage ceremony; I don't believe you can promise those things.' It sounds like sour grapes and it is sour grapes! No one has asked me to marry them. How could I be married? So! I'm not saying that I want to be married – I just want to be asked. However, a person can't have everything.

Jean goes on to explain more about her aunts and their effect on her. In spite of the fact that she doesn't particularly like these women and doesn't respect what she perceives as their narrow view of the world, she is hurt by their judgment that an unmarried woman in the family is an embarrassment.

> I have one aunt. The others are my mother's brother's wives. My father's brother's wives were much the same – like these aren't aunts of my blood, these are the aunts–in–law, all of them, everywhere. There's mostly men in my family. I have one aunt that is my mother's sister that I quite like, and I love her daughters. I mean they're *us*. They think the way we do, they have some of the same values that we do. But somehow these aunts that my mother's brothers married, and that my father's brothers married, represented a whole new view. And somehow my brothers managed to marry women like them too, which completely astonished me. My oldest brother married a woman who is so much like one of my aunts that I can't believe it. And one of the reasons that I don't like to be around there too much is I hate the way they raise their children. Well, I think my sister–in–law is stupid; I think she's not a very bright woman. She has no imagination and she has no sense of humor. And I think it's really restricted her. It's a great shame because she nags my brother. A person would like to say to her, 'Don't nag, it's pointless, it'll never work. He's going to be the way he is.' And he puts up with it and I mean, one goes away, one doesn't interfere. He is married to her, he likes it, he has stayed married to her, he had children, he chose that life. But even so, you wonder. And it was the same with the aunts. My sister–in–law is just another generation of the aunts. They have a certain very narrow view of the world and what women do and what women are and what makes women successful. And although they try, because after all they married into the family, they try to accept the fact that you're not like all those other other women, they never really accept it. And they'd like nothing better than for me to get married, and then they would know that I was okay. And they wouldn't have to feel ashamed of me somehow. I don't know that they feel ashamed of me. I have been a failure basically; that if I was more loveable, or more something, less inflexible or less fussy or less whatever they think I am, then I would be married, and I wouldn't be an embarrassment to them. Having an unmarried woman in the family is an embarassment. The funny thing is that they're not embarrassed by unmarried men in the family. I have a brother who's not married and he's 26, which is pretty old. My other brothers all got married when they were 24 and 25. And my younger brother is a darling and he's just the sweetest boy. He's definitely my favorite. I can't understand why he's not married, but he's not. And it's his right. I don't feel that they critcize him, and I've always felt that they feel kind of sorry for me. I can't stand the thought that they feel sorry for me because I'm not married. For all they know I chose not to be married and I've had thousands of offers. Except that I know that they secretly know that I haven't, you see. I know that those people, they have a very narrow view, but they home right in on what they think is important, and they have complete insight into the tiny amount of the universe that they think is important. So I'm not fooling them. So they think that since that's all that's important to them, and that I'm not successful in that, that I'm not successful. And the other stuff is just extra. Well I manage to get along on the extra. I've got along for 34 years on the extra, and just dealt with the fact that I have not been successful in this little chunk. Not very well, but I have dealt with it.

The effect on Jean of what she perceives as her aunts judgment of her is negative enough that she prefers to avoid them. She sees a similarity between her aunts and sisters-in-law, and believes there is a destructive aspect to the kind of narrowness she perceives in them.

> So anyway, that's the aunts and the world, and rural Saskatchewan. You know? And I don't know, I stay away from them. I promised to go home this summer because it's been a really long time, and because I want to see my brothers. If one could ever kind of peel one's brothers away from their wives and their families, and all of these connections that they've made outside the family, you could have that back that you once had - that kind of closeness! And I know from my mother's family that her two brothers married women that were so unlike each other - these are the aunts - so unlike each other that they changed the brothers and eventually, because the aunts couldn't get along with each other, the brothers couldn't visit each other. Because the wives had nothing to say to each other. And their lives diverged, and it was really sad. Because they met as middle aged men, and they hardly - like they lived nearby but they didn't see each other after the older one gave up his farm. And they met at somebody's funeral and they actually got talking to each other, and it was such a shame that they'd missed that. That they'd lost that. And my own brothers did the same. My two older brothers married women just like my two aunts, and totally different from each other, who couldn't get along. And they each magnified the differences in my brothers so they couldn't get along either. And it's such a shame! Anyway, that's completely irrelevant. It just has to do with the nature of auntness. One aunt and one sister-in-law are the untidy aunt type, you know, whose kids run all over but who has clean dishes. She's funny because she's really a clean housekeeper, but she's incredibly messy. Like she's the kind of person that will have washed and ironed clothes hanging up around the plate railing in the dining room every day; where every single thing will be clean but it will be out. She never throws away anything. It's just crazy. And my other aunt is the fanatic housekeeper, neatnik type, whose children are utterly polite and utterly repressed. She's this little bird. And you can imagine how much these two aunts and these two sisters-in-law who are the same, had in common. Each of them hated the way the other one raised their children and how the other one treated their individual husband. The only things that were important were the houses and the children and the husbands, and they didn't agree on any of those things - there was nothing left to agree on - that's what bothered me, was that the world was so narrow - so there wasn't any meeting ground. I mean it's just not right! So anyway, so much for the aunts.

Jean clarifies that the opinion of these women who married into her family is important for several reasons: they influence the men's opinions, and they represent grass roots opinion. Most importantly, they reflect Jean's own criticism of herself that she is a failure as a woman because she is unloved.

> The aunts are kind of a special case, and the sisters-in-law. Mostly because although they don't so much matter, they influence the opinion of the people who do - the brothers and the uncles who are my family. And they are - there is no getting around it - influenced by their wives, stupid as they may seem. And it's the same with all of the unconsidering, narrow-minded people in the world. They have influence. You don't want to be what they want you to be, but they have influence in ways that affect your life. So they have a certain power that is real. Quite aside from the fact that I feel criticized and it makes me uptight, those people are grass roots opinion, and until grass roots opinion changes, the world won't get any better for the next generation

of kids that grow up, who aren't like everybody else. The world won't get any better for the fringe until grass roots opinion on fringe changes. And it bothers me that narrow-minded people's opinions can matter. But they do matter. It's true that I don't think about the next generation too much, and I don't. In the end, that's not the most important thing. The most important thing is me, that they reflect a criticism that I make of myself and they, because they reflect it, they multiply it. If I didn't in some way believe they were right, it wouldn't matter what they thought. Who cares? So I have these dumb aunts. But I too feel that I'm a failure as a woman because no man loves me, and therefore they're right. Even though they're wrong in everything else, they're right in that, and therefore their opinion matters. But only in that. So I guess the important thing is not the fact that these people whose opinions don't matter to me in the general rule, because they are – I mean I don't give a shit that these people don't for instance think that the other things that I value are important; I don't care that they don't live the kind of life that I think that they should live. I only care about this one thing, because I think they're right. I think that they're right that I'm a failure because no one loves me. That it's one of the things that it is important to be successful in – that is, in relations with human beings and with men. I mean there wouldn't be men and women if it wasn't important that they get along. Therefore I think it's a value. I think that relations between men and women, however rotten they may be on the whole, that there's an ideal condition and that it should exist. And therefore it's right to criticize the fact that it doesn't exist. Something's gone wrong.

Practically speaking, Jean believes that there are not many unmarried men whom she would consider interesting. At the same time she is getting tired of being independent and alone. She considers it a possibility that men, like women, want to be loved, but that they have learned not to talk about it or may not even be aware of these feelings. Nevertheless, Jean is aware of differing social attitudes toward men and women who spend all of their time working.

But the thing is, I'm very fussy. I mean I don't want just any old person, you see. One of the reasons I'm not married is because I have only met basically a few men in my life that I'd be really interested in spending a lot of time with, and having babies with. And on the whole they are already married, because they're so neat. Why wouldn't they be married? Why would a person that neat, that sort of well evolved or whatever, not be married? It would be crazy for them not to be married at my age and their age. Of course they're married because they wouldn't feel fulfilled if the weren't married, you see? But there aren't any single men aged 35 who fill my very stringent qualifications for a marriageable man, that aren't married. They couldn't be not married. So it's no longer one of the options because I just don't think that that person, that mythical person, is going to turn up – be perfect and not be married. It's not likely. But I never cease to be sorry that that's true. Because I don't really like being alone. I am. The fight for independence went on for quite a long time and I'm tired of it. Now these are the years I understand, the next five years, during which I have to accept the fact that I will be alone. Up until now were the years when I could say that I chose to be alone. I started earlier to say that I felt that men had it easier because all they had to do was have a job they felt was meaningful and do it, and that everything else was secondary. And that what women have to achieve is to be loved, and that's much harder to achieve. And that possibly men need to be loved as much as women do, but they don't think about it, they don't talk about it. They either pretend that it's not important or they actually just don't think about it; they just suffer. I'm not saying they don't suffer; I'm saying that they don't know why they're suffering and they don't constantly think about the fact that nobody loves them. They just work harder. Whereas women

> don't usually have that outlet. Or if they do, they and everybody else feel that they're overcompensating. 'Poor thing, she works so hard because there's nothing else going in her life.' And maybe she does. I mean it's one way to pass the time. You can get a lot done while you're not being loved. In fact I know women artists who are only really productive when they're very unhappy, and when there are men around or when they are happy, they don't do a darn thing. They just kind of lie around and have a good time. And they feel that from the standpoint of productivity, what they need is to be unhappy, although they wouldn't ever choose to be unhappy. But they also know when they're unhappy, that they're being unhappy because they're not loved. And I don't know whether men do know that that's what's the matter.

Jean contemplates the nature of men, wondering if the men she knows as friends are typical and if the majority of men are interested in friendships with women. For herself she knows that a relationship with a man that wasn't based on friendship and common interests would be unsatisfactory.

> I've often thought though, that I misjudge men. It's possible that I don't know men very well. That those individual men that I know, who have been my friends, maybe they're not regular men, maybe they're different. Because men who like women, who choose women for their friends, are not usual. I don't think they are. I think that most men don't choose women for their friends. They choose them for other reasons. It's not that they don't associate with women, but they don't think of them as buddies, as people to talk to, people to tell their problems to and discuss things with, to work with. They don't think of them as friends. And men who do think of women as friends are not your common run of men. Like my father was a man who liked women – like genuinely liked them, thought they were interesting. And I know a few other men who do. Sometimes they are men who are bisexual, but not necessarily. I know men who are perfectly, normally, happily married, who like women. And who just like them. And my father of course was, I would say, fairly heterosexual, and he liked women. He liked the way their minds worked. He cared about them. And I've often found that I don't actually like a lot of men. Their values are not my values. The things that they think are important, I don't think are important. And they irritate me because they concentrate on things that are irrelevant, basically. And I think that a lot of men think about women that way. Which is sort of short sighted of them, I think. I don't know. It's difficult! I wonder how women and men get together, you know? Do they get together on those other planes which have nothing to do with friendship, which is so valuable? I mean I find that it's quite a lot easier to love somebody that you like – that you're friends with – because you have a lot more to work from. You've got all this big base of common belief and common experience and common value. And it's a lot easier to love somebody like that than it is to just love somebody because they are what you are not – because they are whatever it is that men are, that women aren't. And I find that it's easy to be physically attracted to certain kinds of men, but in fact they bore me so much, or they intimidate me, or they irritate me, or I have so many other reactions to them I can say, 'Basically, I don't like them.' That the relationship would never go anywhere because I couldn't spend much time with them. You can't spent all of your time in bed. You just can't. And it's always been not, 'Do I want to go to bed with this person?' but, 'could I stand to get up with this person?' It's a hard one.

As Jean continues to talk generally about relationships between women and men, she develops the idea that married men are easier to relate to because they are not seeing her as a sexual object. The fact that men might be judging her as unattractive, as she

judges herself, intimidates her. She sees the problem as cyclical – recognizing that her own negative feelings about herself make her unattractive. Again the connection is made to body weight. Jean comments this time on the way women and men are differently conditioned to think about food.

> I really don't know how all of those women who aren't alone get along. Like I don't really date a lot. I know a lot of men and often wonder what they talk about. Because when I think of the men, they're not interesting. Or if they are interesting – and some of them are – they can never get past certain kinds of man–woman things to be easy, just talk and just be easy. One of the reasons why it's a thousand times easier to like a married man is that he no longer thinks of himself in circulation, and so married men often have good women friends because they don't think of themselves in circulation and they can relate to them. There isn't any kind of – I don't mean competition, I mean neither one of them has any vested interest in – and by vested interest I mean neither one of them is thinking of the other one as a possible option in their future, and so they can just live in the present of enjoying each other's company. And so often I've seen men kind of blossom after they're married. And it doesn't have so much to do with the fact that they have a good relationship going, although that always helps, but it has also to do with the fact that they're not under a certain kind of strain anymore. And it's true of women as well. They no longer have to think that they're being pursued by everybody that walks by them, and they can just be. And some of them it makes nicer and some of them it doesn't. It's hard for me to talk about men, because even though I come from a family of men, I don't understand men very well. I don't know a lot of men. I find them quite incomprehensible some of the time. And very intimidating, because I always think that they're judging me. Basically by my appearance. It's very difficult. And on that single plane I would always say that a man that was interested in me doesn't have very good taste, basically. So that's always kind of a step against him. That's a problem, you know. And I'm not saying that there haven't been men that haven't got to know me. Of course there have. Most of them are married. It doesn't matter to them what I look like; it only matters to them what I *am* like. But anyway there's been other men as well, but only after I knew them. Like I have never gone out with a man that I didn't know – that I didn't either work with or go to school with or know over a period of time, or have friends in common with, so that they could actually know what I was like and be interested in me. Because if they saw me on the street, they wouldn't be interested in me. And I know they wouldn't be interested in me, so I put them off – I think that it's aura. I mean I really think that you arrange things for yourself. I mean it's like butterflies – you give off sprays or something. If you don't think that anybody's going to be interested in you, they're not. It's as simple as that. And unless you can convince yourself that they ought to be, because obviously you're fascinating and you're attractive, they won't be. And since I hardly ever think that I'm fascinating or attractive, I'm alone a lot. I don't know. There's no solution. It's a complicated sort of circle, but it is circular. If I can ever become thin, and convince myself that I'm attractive, then there problably will be men, because there have been before. And even occasionally now, but very occasionally. But it really is sporadic. And there's no way to kind of get started, because you need some kind of push to get started. But until you get started there's no push. I don't know. Everytime I go on a diet I think, "Maybe this time, maybe this time there'll be kind of a click in my mind that causes me to no longer be the person that I was. To suddenly become a person who isn't interested in food, who can let 12 o'clock go by without thinking, 'it's 12 o'clock'." Even though I know perfectly well that women are conditioned by their existence. I read this in a book and it immediately struck a cord. Women are conditioned to think about food, that basically it's their responsibility to at least care whether people are getting fed. And they may or may not reject that responsibility, but they think

> about it. They think, 'Somebody should make lunch.' Men don't think that. They think, 'I'm hungry.' They don't think, 'Somebody should make lunch,' You go off on an expedition – who thinks about the food? The woman does. It's programming. You're programmed to think about food, to care whether people are hungry and to care whether the meals get made. And men aren't. My brothers all can and will and do cook. But they cook when they feel hungry, they don't cook because they feel an obligation that food should get made.

Continuing her discussion of women and men in general, Jean states she would like to be seen by men both as a peer whom they respect and as a sexual being – a 'real woman'. She would also like to be respected by women, and this, she believes, means having to be loved, being capable of nurturing children and being an understanding and unselfish person. Jean believes that women judge women by different standards than they judge men, and by different standards than men judge women.

> There's probably all kinds of stuff that I haven't actually thought about that are there. That I take for granted, have always taken for granted. Well, it's all part of the same thing. Women have to be successes both in the eyes of other women and in the eyes of men. That is, it's important to a woman that men think they're 'real women' and that women think that they're successful as women. Whereas men don't put that high a value on the opinion of women. And so to them it only matters if they're successful in the eyes of what they consider their peers – other men. I think men kind of think of women on two planes. They think of them as sexual beings, and on another plane they think of them as being their peers in other occupational ways. Not necessarily the same women, the same things. And for me personally, I would like to be thought a woman, a 'real woman', by men, both sexually – that is, considered as a sexual person rather than just a person – and I would also really like to be respected by them as a peer, just as if I was a man. I mean as a peer, genuine, someone who can do a good job, someone who has strength and status in the world of work. But I feel that women judge women in a different way. They may or may not respect them because of a good job of work, but they don't think of that first. They tend to think of women as being successful if they are loved, and if they're lovable. They're successful if they can relate to other women and if they can have this kind of nurturing talent that women are supposed to have – if they have kind of the touch with children for instance. It's nice if a man has the touch with children, but you tend to kind of remark it. You know? Like my father and all of my brothers, really wonderful with kids, they have the touch. But even then we considered them unusual. And it wasn't to a man's detriment if he didn't have it, but it was to his credit if he had it. But it's really to a woman's detriment if she doesn't have it. She's not a woman, she's an abnormal woman if children don't take to her. And women expect other women to be able to relate to people. They expect them to be able to be kind of warm, be understanding. It's important to be understanding if you're a woman. It's important to be unselfish. And I'm not saying that those things aren't important. They are important. I mean I like women, I value women's opinions, I respect them for the same reasons that I want them to respect me, or I don't respect them if I feel that they fail to be strong in certain ways that I think women should be strong. But I think that women judge other women by different standards than they judge men, and by different standards than men judge all women.

Another aspect of Jean's being a woman is her sexuality, a topic which so far has been addressed only indirectly. Jean spoke about her late-developing sexuality, early considerations that she might be a lesbian (someone else's suggestion), later

considerations that she might be bisexual and her final conclusion that she is hetereosexual. Again, the fear of being negatively judged inhibits Jean's involvement in relationships.

> I've always been really ambivalent about sexuality because I was a late developer. I've matured early physically but in fact had no sexual interest beyond the most purely academic and utterly romantic, until I was in my mid-20s. And it was cause for a lot of anguish because I thought that I was not normal in various ways because, well, obviously I wasn't normal. I think that most people do develop sexual interest earlier than 25. I mean it's, well 23. And I didn't actually do anything about it until I was 25. I didn't meet anybody I was interested in particularly. I had an early phase when I thought that I might be homosexual because it was suggested to me that I might be, and I didn't know that I wasn't because I didn't know that I was anything else. And I had a long period of pain when I was really very unsure, until a psychologist suggested to me that if I was I probably would know it. And I somehow managed to believe him, and then I stopped worrying about it for quite a long time. And in the last six months, I again wondered if I might be bisexual. Because I like women. I like women quite a lot, but in fact I have no sexual interest in them. I've never dreamed about women sexually, and I have often dreamt about men sexually - all kinds of men. Usually men I know. In fact always men I know, I think. So I'm quite sure that I actually am heterosexual, although you wouldn't know it from my daily life. Because it turns out one can get along for years on end without any sexual activity if there isn't any to be had, if you're not interested in having casual affairs with people who don't matter, no matter how my ego may need the idea that I'm not completely physically repulsive. Occasionally my ego needs it very badly, but not enough to actively seek reassurance. Because there's always the possibility of utter destruction if one finds out that in fact a person is completely repulsive. And it's always better to be unsure than to be destroyed. So I get along from year to year. It hasn't been all that long, but it seems like quite a long time.

In spite of being insecure about herself, Jean is clear about the kind of relationship she would like with a man - a full relationship with a man who could be a fabulous friend as well as a lover.

> I'd really like to have a full, a really full relationship with a man. I just don't want to never have had that. I've had various kinds of happiness, short and long term, and I've had various kinds of pleasure, and quite a lot of misery. Utter, blank misery! And if that be love, I can do without it. But what I'd like is to have the real thing. I would like to have kind of fortified friendship - like fortified wine, with the extra spice. That's what I'm after. I'm not fussy - I just want everything! I don't want just sex. I want a fabulous friend that I can do stuff with and have a good time with and who will laugh at my jokes and who will get up and turn up the heat in the morning and who will do the laundry some of the time, and a sexual relationship. I mean I want it all! And if I can't have it all, I'll do without. I've done without this long. Hmmm! The most interesting men that I know are married. And they're married because they're interesting; there isn't any reason why they would be single. It would be against nature for them to be single. Because they're nice and they're intelligent and they're funny and they're warm and they're loving. Why should they be single? It's depressing! I mean it's not depressing that they're not single; it's depressing that I'm single because I think that I'm potentially all those things, if I could have figured it out earlier when there were still single men around. Oh well, there's always the cats.

From Jean's discourse on the nature of cats and dogs and their similarity to men and

women, we learn that basically she does not like the dependency she perceives in herself and in other women, preferring instead the independent behaviour she perceives as typical of men. It appears that in striving for independence, Jean is denying herself the connection she longs for but fears.

> I actually like cats. I find them quite entertaining. I have always maintained that cats remind me of men. People always take the opposite opinion, but I find that cats are like men and dogs are like women. Because dogs are much more dependent. Dogs need to be loved, they need to be cared about. They die of loneliness and boredom, dogs do. They can't kind of survive on their own. And if they're on their own, like if they go wild, they're rarely single dogs. They'll either travel as a pack or they'll mate; they tend to pair-bond like wolves. But cats, they live their lives, they're independent, they can be either completely oblivious of your presence or they can make you feel like the sun shines on only you. And when they're living their lives, you don't exist. They're just like men. But I like them, you know? I mean I like them. They don't make me depressed like dogs do. I mean dogs are a burden to me because I think, 'You shouldn't need it that badly, dog. Look after yourself! Have a little dignity! Have a little self-respect!' But a cat, they don't need it. And if they do, they demand it. You know, have you ever seen an unhappy cat? I've seen unhappy dogs. Yeah, I've seen one of my cats is unhappy, but it's because he's sick. He's been sick for a long time. They're not my cats, actually. I look after them. But the other one, the world is his. He doesn't worry about the stuff that he hasn't got. And the things that he has got, he uses, he enjoys them. I think that's the way to be - catlike. I mean not the only values in the world are independence and self-sufficiency. Obviously they are not the only values, but they are important. They're what free you to develop. If you're not self-sufficient, if you're constantly bound by your need for approval by other people and support from other people, then you are bound. You can only go so far. And then you've got to either separate yourself, or you won't get any farther. I mean unless you can take them with you. That's where pair-bonding comes in. That's where you have someone who understands that part of you is bound and part of you is free, and they kind of go along.

Jean explains her idea of an ideal relationship - a relationship that is parallel, equal and mutually supportive. Most marriages she sees do not appeal to her.

> I believe in parallel. I don't believe in coupling - I've never wanted marriage in the classic sense. What I want is to have a parallel life with somebody that I value - somebody who is doing what he's doing and part of it is with me. And I'm doing what I'm doing and part of it's with him. That's what I want. And the only way you can have this is with two people who are so strong and who are so in touch with what they are, that they don't feel threatened if anything is taken away from them, and they can accept what's offered to them. But if both people aren't equally strong, then there's an unnatural strain in the relationship. And some relationships can take it and some can't. But it ends up, if it's uneven, one of them is doing an awful lot of work, is doing too much supporting. And therefore, because the one of them is doing a lot of supporting, they're not free to develop themselves and they get bound, they get stunted. And I thing that's a shame. I think that a lot of marriages are a shame. When I see people who are doing well, as a married couple, it just gives me a thrill. I think, 'Well, that's the way it's supposed to be!' But God they're rare! They're so rare! You wonder if the human race has learned anything, or whether even individuals learn anything from people's mistakes. Why does your vision end when it comes to yourself and to your own relationship? I mean people talk about other people, I mean obviously I'm a perfect example. It's easy to talk about other people and what they're doing

that's right and what they're doing that's wrong. And it's very difficult to see what you're doing that's right and that's wrong. Because you're living in it.

An optional relationship Jean has thought about is separate living space with visiting privileges, which she perceives to have distinct advantages. She describes a couple she knew who had such an arrangement, realizing they could manage it because they had enough money and no children.

> I've often thought about options of relationships. And I have to admit that I've always been attracted to the option of separate residences with visiting privileges. It's true that there are problems with that, there are problems with having the kind of decentralized relationship, that if they're never there when you really want them – there always will be times when you really want them and they're not there. But the advantages are that you can both achieve the other things that you think are important, and because you have those other satisfactions, the time that you take to be with each other, you enjoy more. You say, 'Well, I've earned this, dammit! I've been working away, I've achieved these things and I've done things that were important, and I deserve to have the happiness of this relationship on Wednesday.' Or whatever. I actually know a couple out at the coast who – they were kind of the delight of all their friends because they were both approaching middle age and she was in her late 30s and she had never married. And he had been married and his wife had left him and he was in his early 40s, I think. And they both taught at the college and he was a Chemistry teacher and she was history or something. And their characters were in every way totally different. She was one of those incredibly meticulous housekeepers. I know, because I was her cleaning lady. It was one of my part time jobs when I was trying to make a living at the coast. I did a bit of everything, including being a cleaning lady. Her house was in a state of perfection, and it obviously hadn't changed. She was one of the people who threw things out as soon as she realized she hadn't used it in the last month. There was never any mess, there was never anything lying around. If she didn't use it, she got rid of it. She even got rid of books. I would go, 'Gasp! What do you mean? You might want to read it sometime,' you know? But no, she even got rid of books. He, on the other hand, was one of these incredibly messy people, one of these people who could only work if both the radio and the television were on – that kind of person. And we all thought, 'Oh God, if they ever get married they'll just drive each other bonkers.' And they of course had this relationship which they had maintained, with her living in her house and him living in his apartment across town. And they kind of visited back and forth and they'd spend nights at one place or the other, eat one place or the other and whatever, and they were happy. They were so happy it was ridiculous! I mean they just went around mooning. It was really funny. But I thought, 'Oh God, if they ever get married what will they do?' And what they did was, they were both making good money – I realize I'm using up tape with this story but I love this story – and she rented the apartment above his in his apartment building and they got permission to cut a separate stairway down from one apartment to the next, to the other one. And they had separate apartments but they were one above the other. And so they would always eat at her place, but they each had their separate apartment to work in because they both worked at home during the day. And it worked out really well. And eventually they bought a house with six bedrooms or something, this huge house, and they fixed it up so there were actually two suites in it, so that they could be quite separate. But they were lucky because they had money. I mean think of couples who don't have any money and have children, and they can't afford four extra bedrooms just because they need space. We all really kind of laughed at them and we all really envied them, because most people don't have that kind of option. But it was the only thing they could do. I mean otherwise they would have driven each other crazy in a day, if they'd been in a two bedroom apartment someplace. They would never

have made it as a couple. So anyway, that's what I want. I want somebody nearby having a parallel life, doing what he's doing, enjoying what he's doing, enjoying me. I'm doing what I'm doing, enjoying what I'm doing, enjoying him. That's what I want. And if I can't have that, I'll just go on doing what I'm doing and having friends and having family and having men come and go. There are men, they're just not very often or very long.

In answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?" Jean spoke above about her personal life, about her perceptions of social expectations and norms for women's behavior, and about the 'nature' of women and men. Asked, "What do you think of this saying: 'It's a man's world'?" Jean speaks about the historical roots of men's public power, men's overlooking and devaluing of women's essential contributions to society, and the social structures which restrict women's choices.

Oh, that one really depends on what day you ask me. It's a simplification. I think that saying is a simplification of a complex situation. I think that certainly historically, that men have had the public power. And to this day men have most of the public power. They handle the rising and falling of the economic situation, they handle the political arena – all of that kind of public world is the man's world. But I don't think that women have no place. I have never thought that women have no place. I know damned well that the world wouldn't work without them, and that women, even in their most powerless circumstances which do and always have existed everywhere, that women have power anyway just because they have strength. They have always believed that they have a responsibility to the race, certain kinds of responsibility, and against great odds they manage to carry it out. Most of which – like the greatest responsibility has to do with nurturance of children and of men and of each other and of the world, and trying to see that the men pay attention to it, that the nurturance of all kinds doesn't get forgotten. And I think that though women may not have – they don't control the outer arena, they control the humming center. And if it didn't hum basically, if the centre didn't keep being in there going, the nucleus in the cell, there wouldn't be anything going on out there. There just wouldn't. And so basically, as far as I'm concerned, they can have the world. I don't want the world, I want this. I want value, I want essence, I want love, I want the eternal verities, I want the moral values. I want all of that stuff that you don't have to have the world for; what you have to have is human beings doing what they do. What you have to have is stability. So on the one hand, superficially, it is their world, and they can have it because I don't want it. But on the other hand, if it were only their world, it wouldn't be happening. It just wouldn't be happening because somebody has to keep close to stoke the fire. I don't know. It's all very vague.

I think that women are much stronger than anybody gives them credit for and I have always. It's true that I have chosen at various times to go into male dominated occupations, and part of that is curiosity because I want to know what there is. And I don't want to be stuck someplace. I want to have choices. I've always wanted to have choices. I wanted – even if I made mistakes, I wanted to choose my own mistakes. I didn't want to be told what to do by men or anybody else. And I wanted to be able to look at things to see whether I wanted to do them or not. So I have resisted, and I resist on behalf of all women, restrictions on what they can and can't do. I think that women should be able to do anything they want to do. And some of them are going to choose the man's world and why not? And some men are going to choose the woman's world. And some people, lucky them, are going to manage to be somewhere in the middle. But everybody should have the right to choose. What I resent is the idea that women can only do these things and men can only do those things, and that they should be either incapable or unhappy doing any of the other things. That's crazy! I think that I have drawn

> a division between what I value, and what I think that anyone has a right to say that other people should value. Like I don't care if not another woman in the world wants to keep the home fires burning. That's their decision, and they have a right to make the decision. I happen to prefer a more private life because that's the kind of person I am. But I also want the option of working and making money and having power in my tiny space, and making choices and doing what I want to do, or working or not working or going away or throwing things up or making mistakes. I want those choices. And oh God, I'm really getting mixed up; I've lost my thread. You get talking away and you think, 'I'm proving something.' So what am I proving?
>
> I think that everybody should have the choice. Because what bothers me about restrictions is, if there are restrictions it's because somebody feels their position is threatened. It's because they don't believe that things are going to sort out in the most natural fashion and that most women are going to do a certain kind of thing and that most men are going to do a certain kind of thing probably. And if they don't – but either way, things are going to sort out. There's not going to be an incredible rush for everybody to become politicians. There's not going to be an incredible rush for everybody to become ophthalmic surgeons. People are going to sort out, and so they shouldn't be told, 'You can't become an opthalmic surgeon because you're a woman.' Because they probably didn't want to anyway, and they might not want to even if they always knew that they could if they wanted to. But they're more likely to want to if they don't think they can. Why should restrictions be placed when it's not necessary? People are going to choose what they're good at and what they're happy doing and what they're successful doing. And if they always know that they can choose whatever they like, then they're going to develop in a certain way. They're going to develop and they're going to figure out along the way that they can do this or this, and they'll choose or they won't choose, or they'll try this and try something else. I mean that's okay. But as long as they hanker after something that they figure they can't have, it'll be harder for them to make a reasonable choice. Even if they might have ended up doing the same thing anyway. It'll be harder for them to make a reasonable choice because they'll always say to themselves, 'Well, maybe I could have been a ophthalmic surgeon.' You know? As long as you're restricted in ways that you don't have to be restricted – I mean, obviously I'm never going to be five-foot-eight. I'd like to be five-foot-eight but I'm not going to be, and that's a restriction that comes with the territory. There's nothing I can do about that. But restrictions that aren't necessary, that's the kind of thing that bothers me. But then there are those who think that, 'Of course women can't do that. It's because they can't do it and so they shouldn't do it because they can't do it, and they would never want to anyway. They never have. It's always been like that.'

In partial answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerless?" Jean explains that she feels powerless politically to effect change in the social structure. This does not concern her, however – she does not want to be involved in formal politics or in trying to effect change in the public sphere. Instead she prefers to make changes on a small scale, affecting people by her example – what she perceives as grass roots change.

> I feel powerless politically. I mean we haven't actually discussed this, but it never occurs to me that my tiny opinion here will ever actually get anything moved someplace else. Like I just don't think that it filters through the system. And so I have withdrawn from the political arena. In fact I never entered it because I just don't believe that – I believe that government and politics and the people who care about that kind of thing are going to do it themselves and they're just going to go on doing it, regardless of what I say

about it. I'm one of the many who feel that they don't have any political power and that there's nothing that they can really do to change either law or government or society or any of that big stuff, and consequently don't tend to go out and do it. They tend to let the people who are doing it, do it. Whoever those people are who choose to become politically active, and start at the bottom and work their way up and get voted into parliament, and then go off there and maybe they can change the machine. But me, Ms. Voter, Ms. Non-voter, you see I don't want to do it. I don't want to be involved in government, and I figure that unless you're actually in on the action there isn't anything you can do. And so I don't do anything about it. And I don't even feel particularly guilty about it. I've got other stuff that's most important going on in my little chunk. I feel bad about the world; I feel bad about the country; I wish I could do something about the starving millions. But basically I can't. Or at least it's not a high enough priority for me to go off and do my tiny little thing someplace where it might do somebody else some good. I'm basically here doing my tiny little thing where it'll do me some good. And that's too bad, but that's the way it is. Because I'm only ever going to be able to do my tiny little thing, I don't want to get involved in the public arena of any kind, be it through journalism or through political activism of any kind. I don't want to do that. I don't want to be involved in trying to change the masses. I just want to be able to do what I'm doing, whatever it is, very well, and affect the people who are immediately around me by my example. I believe in the example. I believe in having the small scale changes. You do what you do and hope that what you're doing adds to the grass roots movement. I believe in grass roots movement. I don't think anything else gets anywhere. I'm not saying that radicalism doesn't have an effect. I think that radicalism does have an effect in that it kind of gets the ball rolling so that the grass roots movement can get kind of chugging along in the background. I'm not a radical. I don't want to do that. I don't want to be the person out in the front hacking away at the first weeds. It's a thankless job. People always dump on you. You have to be extreme in order to achieve anything and people dump on you because you're extreme. I don't want to be extreme, and I don't want to get dumped on, so I just continue to kind of chug away back where I am, living my life, trying to be an example. I believe in being an example. I said that. Trying to be an example to the people immediately around me. So, to sum up, I feel politically powerless and I don't care.

Jean also feels powerless in the face of 'man's inexorable progress toward destruction' and 'man's inhumanity to man.' Unkind people distress her and she avoids them, she explains, because she doesn't know what to do about it.

I feel occasionally powerless in the face of man's inexorable progress towards destruction. I think that the human race is not long for this world and I don't know what to do about that. I guess you just live your life and hope for the best, basically. I feel powerless in the face of man's inhumanity to man. I mean that frustrates me much more than anything else. Everytime I experience any tiny example of anything down to the level of the racist joke, which always incenses me, I can't stand it. I can't stand it that people are awful to other people at every level. Quite often I don't want to know people. I don't want to know that I'm in the world with these people who actually choose to be awful to anybody. I wish that I could just live in my little chunk and not have to deal with the fact that, not even have to accept the fact that there are people out there who are unkind to each other. And I really feel powerless in the face of that. Like I don't want human nature to be creep-like. I want human nature to be jewel-like. And it isn't! And it pisses me off! It's like we could have been angels and who screwed it up? Why aren't we angels? Some people are angels! Why isn't everybody angels? It's the obvious way to be. Why are those people like that? It's unreasonable to expect everybody to be nice, but I do anyway and it hurts me. It hurts me personally. And I avoid them because they can choose to be unkind to each other and to me. People are often unkind and I know they are, and I don't

> want to know about it. That's one of the reasons I'm such a coward. I figure that if I'm not careful I could meet up with some of those people. That's from being timid. I mean nobody in my family was unkind except that we were fairly unkind to Harry, but we didn't really know any better. Well, we loved him anyway; even if he was a jerk. I mean he was our brother and we loved him anyway; we just wanted him to be more perfect. We wouldn't have criticized him so much if we didn't want him to be more perfect. Oh well, anyway. So yes, I feel powerless and distressed in the face of the flaws in human nature. But I'm not prepared to go out and do anything about them except to keep puddling along in my little bit, hoping that people will change. Some days I just feel powerless period. Like I can't do anything. It's partly personal failure of will and partly overwhelming circumstance. It's just like it's all impossible, and that has to be with failure of will, basically. That kind of utter lack of power fortunately doesn't happen to people very often, or they would all kill themselves. I almost never feel that bad.

Jean made references to the Women's Movement several times during the interview. Asked directly, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?" she responded positively with examples of how she perceives it stimulating change for the better, particularly that it is making people aware that they have choices.

> I am personally all for it because I think it's freeing a generation of children. I mean, slowly. There's lots of kids being born even today and growing up stuck with a lot of stuff they don't need to be stuck with. But it's growing. The kids today are different than the kids 15 years ago, and in some ways that's a drag. But in some ways it's a lot better. Because they're aware of more choices and they're capable of making better choices. When I was a child I thought that women could only be nurses or teachers. And like even in those days I was thinking in terms of working – I knew I would work. I didn't know that I wouldn't marry, but I knew I would work. And when I was a little kid I was thinking, 'Well, what on earth am I going to do?' Because I didn't want to be either a nurse or a teacher. And as far as I knew those were the only options.

Jean explained what she perceives to be the purpose of the 'radical fringe' – the women who bring attention to the issues and make people stop and think. She recalls her own realization as to the nature and consequences of sexist educational materials.

> I think that like any revolution, the radical fringe so to speak, the radical members of the movement, were necessary to get it started. I mean I wasn't radical and I didn't want to be, because it's not my character. And I personally would never have chosen to have done or said a lot of things that people did or said. But in the overview of the movement itself, they were necessary because they got it going. And they caused people like me, who just accepted all kinds of stuff all their lives, to think about things. I mean to think about semantics, to think about things that they'd always taken for granted because everybody else took them for granted. And that's important!
>
> I remember when I quit teaching I got a job at an OFY (Opportunities for Youth) project working on non-sexist educational materials. And when I was working on that project I actually came to realize what sexist educational materials were. And that they weren't vile or horrible. Like nobody was trying to bend the minds of children. But I realized during that era how things that are just so innocuous looking do bend the minds of children. And bend the minds of adults. And it's not the single incident, it's the constant hammering that makes things stay the way they are. It's the television commercials – I mean for every television commercial that is a blatant, obvious example of sexism, there are hundreds that are subtle, not at all obvious examples of sexism. And it's the same with everything that we read,

> and everything that we have always taken for granted. It's the little things that add up, it's the little things that everybody says and does in their lives that add up, and it makes a difference. And you have to start thinking in a certain mode before you recognize those things and you say, 'Hey! Just a minute! Do you realize what you just said? And what I just said?' Even now I miss all kinds of stuff. I never think of it, but I'm more aware of it. And I'm aware of it because of the Movement. It made me think, and I passed it on. I mean I had my polemical stage as well, just like everybody else, when I couldn't let anything go by and I had to make an issue of every single thing. And everytime I talked to anybody I got into passionate arguments about stuff. And I must have been real difficult to live with in those days. And these days I'm not passionate and I'm not even as vigilant as I used to be, but I'm a lot more aware.

Jean believes that people recognize her as a feminist because of who she is, because in spite of her fears she does appear to be free, independent and strong. The Women's Movement gave her an understanding of why she didn't fit the stereotyped mold of what women are *supposed to be*, and legitimized her desire to be free.

> I think people recognize me for a feminist, not because of anything I do but because of the way I am. They recognize me because I'm free. I mean I may not seem very free considering all my difficulties, but in many ways I am free. And people can tell by looking at me that I am free, and they don't tend to lay some of the numbers on me that they do on other people. Now that may be good or bad, but it saves me a lot of trouble. There comes a point when you don't have to belt guys that come along and pat you on the ass. They don't do it anymore, because they know that they shouldn't, that it probably would get them a belt if they did. But there's other women that are just living their lives – they're just out there and it's not like they encourage it, it's just like they don't know that they can prevent it. It's like they are just there being victims to whatever people want to do to them. It's true, very often I don't feel very free, but I'm free from I think, I'm free from thinking I'm nothing. I mean I'm not nothing! I'm not only somebody's wife or somebody's daughter or somebody's sister or somebody's girlfriend. I am myself. I mean people think of me as myself and I think even if I were married they'd think of me as myself. They wouldn't think of me as somebody's wife. And I think that that's what I mean by being free. I mean, being free-standing. And it's all bound up with being independent and it's something that I've been working on for years. But it's got to do with being strong. And I may feel that I'm pretty much of a weakling, but I think that in the general run of things I'm not all that weak. And certainly publically I am not all that weak. I may snivel around the house quite a bit, and feel kind of mushy inside, but usually I'm reasonably strong out in the world, even if it means being fairly closed to all kinds of stuff. I don't know, I think I look like that.
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> The Women's Movement just kind of crystallized a whole bunch of stuff that had really been going on in my mind all my life. So that from thinking that I was merely an outcast because I didn't fit any of the regular molds, I at least began to have, to feel that I had company. That there were lots of other outcasts that didn't fit the molds, and that it was going to be okay. It was going to be okay to be a free woman because obviously that was what was in store for me. As soon as I got over, if I ever got over all of my fears, I was on the road to being a free woman from the time I was born. And that's what I was intended to be. And the Women's Movement kind of gave me a hand, because it sort of legitimized it. Otherwise, if I'd been born a generation ago, I'd have had a real hard time.

Comparing her life to the lives of her mother and grandmother, Jean recognizes that they have all been independent and free women. However, her mother and grandmother

did not have the choices she has had, nor did they have support from the Women's Movement to resist being molded. Jean feels confident that the next generation will experience even more change for the better.

> And if my mother hadn't married – she was a free woman. And her mother was a free woman who unfortunately had an awful time. She ended up being married to somebody she didn't care for and it was almost an arranged marriage. In the big farm families in those days that kind of thing did happen. And she was very unhappily married. She should have been running the farm because she had a really good business head, and grandfather was a complete disaster. He was a sweet man, but unfortunately totally under the thumb of his father who was a really strong man and who lived in the house. And there she was, married to a weak son of a strong father, and living in the house, and completely unable to do what she did well, which was to be a business woman. And she died young. When she died it was at about the age of 40 of cancer, because my mother figures she just didn't want to live. She didn't want to live like that. There was nothing in life for her. And if she could have run away and left her children – but she couldn't. She had four children, three years apart, each one three years apart, spread over nine years. And she was not close to the children and she – I mean God, the poor woman was just completely lost. She died. So I have to admit that growing up at the time of the Women's Movement was really a lucky break for me. Because I was going to be like that anyway, and it would have been a much lonelier life, as it had been already for several members of my family. Basically what I'm saying is that I come from several generations of independent women on the mother's side, and that having been born in this generation I had an easier time of it because I had more support from the community at large. I had a hell of a lot more, and the potentials were even more. The possibility that things are – I mean things are changing. I've seen them change in the last 15 years, and it's not going to be the same for the next generation. That's what I feel, is that things are changing and it's not going to be the same. If I were to have a daughter, I could give her a better chance.

I. Heidi

Heidi is a 51 year old woman, born in Czechoslovakia, who at age 17 travelled with her parents to Germany as a refugee. Heidi was the middle child in a family of three children. Her mother, who died 13 years ago, had a grade eight education and was a homemaker. Her father, who died two years ago, had a grade eight education and was a farmer. Heidi has a grade eight education plus two years at an agricultural school. She married at age 23 and at age 25 immigrated to Canada with her husband. For the past 25 years they have lived in Edmonton. They have three children, two daughters and a son who are now in their twenties. At age 49 Heidi separated from her husband and she obtained a divorce a year later. Over the years Heidi has worked as a farm hand, factory-worker, housekeeper, book-keeper, house-builder, masonry assistant, house rental manager, house cleaner, and kitchen helper, in addition to maintaining her own home and raising her three children. At present she works as a house cleaner, making $800 per month. In securing her divorce she gained half of the family rental properties, which soon will result in an additional $2000 per month.

Asked, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?," Heidi first mentioned her recent experience of fighting in court for her divorce, following her decision to stand up for herself against her husband's long-standing abuse.

> I learned that I have to stand up for myself. And through the experience that I had now with my divorce, I really had to fight for everything that I earned. My husband didn't want to give me nothing but I made out all right now because there is nobody else that does it for me and I realize I just have to go on living and fight. It's not over yet but I got so far what I was aiming for. I couldn't take his abusement any more and I knew the kids loved me and they are 100 percent behind me. Lots of times I thought, 'It's not worth it, I would give up.' I was so depressed! But I knew I had to go on because the kids still need me. And so we got now the divorce papers on November 26 and I think it was worth fighting for.

Heidi then went on, for most of the interview, to describe the kind of abuse she has experienced. Mostly she spoke about incidents in a chronological order (as she had just done in her recent court hearing), describing the work she had done, her husband's attitude toward and treatment of her, incidents demonstrating his abuse of her and the children, and the deterioration of their marriage. She began:

My husband treated me for many, many years so bad. He called me names and he aggravated me for no reason whatsoever. I couldn't understand sometimes, why he is always so mean to me. He never called me by my first name. He called me, 'Hey you stupid, you idiot! You come here or else'. And that went on and on and it got worse from year to year and then it got worse from month to month and from day to day. And then I had to beg him many times on my knees that he let me stay because he wanted to throw me out of the house all the time. For every little thing. When I just said the wrong word and he was in a bad mood and he started fighting with me and he said, 'I throw you out of the house! I throw you out of the house!' And it was just like a broken record. And the kids started crying and I cried. I couldn't understand it why he does that all the time to me. I worked all the time and I tried to please him in every way. I went with him to work and I did the housework when he was sleeping so I was ready for him, to go with him outside to work. Because we have eight properties and we built every second year. The last 3 years we built another garage. In 1959 we built our first up and down duplex, and then in 1961 we built another up and down duplex, and in 1963 we built the third up and down duplex. We lived in the first one for five years and the second one was just rented out always to tenants. And then we had the third one finished, he convinced me that this would be a prettier house and better built and we should move in that one. But I was reluctant to move in because I knew he just had purchased the land on his own name and he never even had told me about it when he bought the land. Only when the land title came to our house and I said, 'Well, what is this?' And he said, 'Well, I bought some more land, and we build another house.' And I says, 'You didn't have no money.' Well he said he borrowed it. And so it was in November and the government had put out a winter works program. Everybody that built a house get $500 from the government. So he said if we build another up and down duplex that means we have two suites so he want to have the $1000. But we had to have it finished before March 31 – inspected by the government inspector, everything ready except the stucco could be put on after, but everything else had to be finished.

As Heidi continues to describe the work she did alongside her husband it becomes clear that the working conditions he forced upon her were extremely harsh. The stress of long hours and hard labor was compounded by the need of her children to be cared for and supervised.

So we built that house. We started on the fourth of November, 1963 and we had it finished by the 31st of March. I helped on that house from the very first block that we laid until the last thing it was finish. We did everything ourselves. We only had the plumber and the electrician and heating done by other contractors. And a cabinet maker we had just make the rough cabinets for the downstairs suite and for the upstairs suite, and I did all the finishing. We worked sometimes until 4 o'clock in the morning. I remember I fell asleep when we covered the stairs with linoleum. That had to be done too before the inspector came. I fall asleep while laying the tiles. It was just unreal that winter. We worked every Saturday, every Sunday, and every day till way after midnight to get it all done because you couldn't even get any tradesmen that winter because everybody was building and everybody wanted to get those $500. And the tradesmen jacked up their prices and so we didn't have any money. He just borrowed $10,000 on our second house that we built and he couldn't get any more. That was the limit, $10,000. So we managed with that and we owed still a lot of contractors when it was finished but then we paid that off quickly. It was cold that winter. I wore sometimes six pair of slacks and six pair of socks and heavy boots from my husband, and a big parka and two pair of gloves. And I still was freezing while I was working with him. We built the basement out of blocks because my husband was a bricklayer so he didn't want to have any concrete forms up. That went for us faster, building it up with concrete

blocks. And then we filled the blocks with reinforcing rods and with concrete. And the front wall of that house we had with 12 inch blocks because he wanted to put bricks on the front so he had to have a wider foundation for those bricks sitting on top than the rest of the walls. There was supposed to be stucco on the outside. So he had 12 inch blocks and he ordered heavy weight because they were cheaper than the lightweight. One block was so heavy that I hardly could lift it off the ground. Now I asked just before the divorce trial came up because the lawyer told me he might ask me how much one of them blocks weighed, that I had to carry. Thousands of them I carried while I was married to my husband. So one block weighed 65 pounds, they told me at the Edcon Block Plant. And I lifted them in the wheelbarrow and I took always two. That's the most I could carry. And I wheeled them from the back lane almost to the front of the street and I did that day after day after day until the basement was finished. It was sometimes so cold that the morter was freezing on the trowel and I had to make fire in the wheelbarrow and put the pail with mortar on top of the fire so he could get working shovel by shovel. It was just awful! But he want to build the house in winter. So it got close to Christmas and so he said, 'After Christmas it will be colder so therefore we have to keep on going.' And then we build the walls by ourself and even those long two-by-four walls, the partition walls, we put them up all by ourselves. Sometimes they fell down. It was just horrible! I swept snow every morning. We came to the house because we just lived across the street from where we were building and I had to sweep out all the snow so we could work. And then we nailed the floor and then we made the roof and we had the bench saw beside the house and I had to hold every piece of lumber. I had to help him measure and I had to help him cut and then we put it up on the roof and then we put plywood sheets on the roof. And when we were nailing the plywood sheets, my little girl, the youngest one, she was two and one-half years old, she had to always play in the snow and she had to watch me. I gave her a shovel and a little pail and everyday she went with me to work. I didn't have no babysitter, not for one hour. And the two older kids were in school. And then in the evening I quick went home and put something on the stove and the oldest girl, she was just seven years old, she had to take care of the other two kids. The little one, I pushed her in the house and my oldest, at seven year old, she took care of the two younger ones. We just had a little bit supper and after supper we went out to work again. We always worked with lights, two and three trouble lamps we had out there. And when we were nailing the roof, my neighbour, she called me and she said, 'Your little girl is on the other side of the roof'. She said she climbed up on the ladder but she didn't want to disturb her; she just hoped and prayed that she doesn't fall and slip. And she had the rubber boots on, the snow boots and the snow outfit, and she came walking up on the roof. 'My God,' I thought, 'she has more luck than brains.' There was not even an eavestrough. The ladder hadn't any hold, just was the straight plywood. So we took then a rope and tied her onto the chimney so she couldn't slip off the roof. She just wanted to see me because she was so lonely down there.

Working every day with her husband at hard labor under extreme conditions was routine for Heidi – her husband expected it and he was 'the boss', as he often reminded her. Heidi accepted these working and living conditions, anxious to take advantage of the opportunities available to them in their new homeland. When he began to get verbally abusive, threaten her and beat her, however, she thought he was 'mean'. She explains she would have liked to leave him but being an immigrant could not return to her family in Germany. She saw no options for herself in Canada, lacking knowledge of services available and having no friends and no support. Therefore, thinking first of her children

and her desire to provide them with an education, she decided to put up with the abuse.

> So when that house was finished, about a year later, my husband started to get mean to me. He said for every thing, 'I throw you out of my house.' He said this is his house and because he has just his name of that house, therefore he says I have no right to this house, I have nothing to say and he is the boss and if I don't do what he says, he throw us all out of the house. And he got meaner and meaner. And I asked him one time how come he never puts my name of that house. 'This is our house,' I says, 'the whole family lives here; this should be our home.' And he always yelled, 'The hell it is! This is my house and if you don't like it, go to hell!' I never said nothing because I was not allowed to say anything, because he got really upset. He was mean and one time he beat me up and I was pregnant with my youngest – when we were building our first house. We were working all winter, finishing the house inside and we were building the cupboards and we didn't have no table saw. We just had a skillsaw to cut everything. Then I had to hold it for planing, for cutting, for measuring. And anytime he had forgotten the measurement what he had said – and I wasn't listening too good because different measurements for every little piece – it was always my fault, when he cut something wrong or he measured something wrong. And then one afternoon he was really nasty. He start to snap his fingers all over me. I was blue and it hurt and he just didn't want to quit. I got so upset I started crying. I said, 'If you don't quit right now I don't know what I should do.' And he says, 'You can't do nothing. You're my wife and you have to take what I hand out to you.' And he just kept snapping his fingers all the time at me and I slapped him one. I couldn't take it anymore. Then he beat me up and I was standing by a fridge. I sank to the bottom. He kicked me and he slapped me; I was blue and black all over. I cried for mercy. He didn't stop. He said he will teach me a lesson that I will never forget the rest of my life. I thought I never get up again. I was about six months pregnant. The other two kids were in school. They didn't see it. I didn't talk to him for about three days; I just cried. I was so homesick. When he always started talking I just answer him when I had to. And I said, 'If there was a bridge that goes back home across the ocean, I would walk on that bridge and never come back, if he ever does that to me again.' I said, 'I'm not a dog that you just can kick around whenever you feel like it.' But I knew I didn't have no choice. My parents, my sister and brother, they are in Germany; they couldn't help me. And I didn't have anybody to go to. And I never had heard of welfare so I didn't have anybody to go to. So where are you going to go with two little kids? I don't have no friends or no relatives. So I just had to take it and take it and take it. And I thought, 'I'm going to raise those kids and when they are grown up and it's still the same or maybe worse, I'm not going to stand the rest of my life like that. I'm going to wait until the kids finish their school. Whatever he will hand out to me I will take.' I said that to my kids when they came home. They were small, but they understood already because they were scared to death too of their father. Just the other day I talked to my oldest daughter, just before we went into court and she said, 'You know Mom, all the things that Dad did to us' – she had forgotten about most of the things – and she said, 'You know, when I think back when I was a little girl, I thought always that he was the devil.' 'Yeah,' I laughed and I said, 'well I told you always to be polite, he is your father, you have to do what he says and don't talk back to him.' I must have told those kids about a million times. But as they grew older, especially the oldest one said, 'Well, how long do I have to shut up? I am grown up now; I go to work and I know what is right and wrong and I know he is wrong.' But he had to be always right. And if anybody speaks up otherwise he gets so mean and he hits everybody, slaps them around and calls them names and he wants to throw them out of the house. Even in the middle of the night he said sometimes, 'I throw you out of the house and I never let you in. I lock the door and change the locks on the door.' And that everybody was scared of, because we didn't have anybody to go to. So he kept us, for the last 15 years, ever since we built that house which we lived in last, he kept us like that.

Heidi recalls that her husband actually began being abusive to her shortly after they came to Canada. She describes how, when they experienced hard times and periods of unemployment, her took out his anger on her. When he had a disagreement with the husband of her German friend, for example, he forbade her to see her friend, a situation which was doubly tragic for her because she could not speak much English. Then, apparently to teach her that his word was law, he locked her out of the house on a cold winter afternoon. Having no where to go and not wanting to leave her baby with him, she begged him to let her in and let her stay.

> I remember he started already when we came to Canada, when my oldest one was about one-half years old. We came to Edmonton and my husband didn't have no work and we knew a German family that came with us to Canada on the boat. The lady she worked with me in the factory in Germany and we rode the train every morning and every evening together. So we came together to Edmonton. She was my only friend that I had. She was a dressmaker and her husband was a plasterer. And her name was Magda. And she was such a nice girl. Her husband was out of work in winter too. And my husband was a bricklayer and he was out of work so they both got together and another fellow they had met and they seen an ad in the newspaper that there would be a job in Winnipeg cutting lumber in a bush camp and it said they could make good money. So they got together and the plasterer had already a car so they used his car and the other two contributed towards the gas and they went to Winnipeg. I was working in a coffeeshop as a dishwasher at that time. I had to quit work because I didn't have nobody to look after my little baby. Because my husband had been home for a couple of weeks and he did the babysitting. And Magda, she had just another little baby, she had a baby about a year old and then she had the second one just three weeks old and she had to stay home and couldn't go to work. And the third lady, she had four kids and couldn't go to work because her youngest one was just a baby. But they both had a little bit money to pay the rent. And we had just bought a little old house on 109 Street and 107 Avenue. We just had bought that house in September that year, for $1000 down payment and $50 mortgage payment a month. So my husband went to Winnipeg and I had $50 in the bank account to pay the next mortgage payment for December and I had a paycheque coming for $17 on the coffeeshop when I quit. So he said, 'When I go to Winnipeg you have enough money for just a little bit grocery and until I get paid you should have enough,' and then he would send me some money. But we never heard from them three guys. They had left Edmonton and nobody knew where they were. Three weeks after we still didn't know and then we got worried. And we met each other - we walked to each other's place because we wouldn't spend 10 cents on a busride, because that gave us a bottle of milk. So when we wanted to see each other we walked to each other's place. And then we got so worried we didn't know anymore what to do. The next mortgage payment came up, must of been the first of December or something and I said, 'I still have my $50 in the bank. I will go tomorrow and take it out and make the mortgage payment.' And I had a few dollars left for milk and bread. And then we said if we don't hear from our husbands next week, then maybe through the radio station we can locate them or go to the police. But in the meantime, everybody will run out of money and then nobody can pay the rent anymore. So we decided if we don't hear from them for another week or so then we'll move all together in my house and then two of us ladies go to work and one stays home with the kids. So I said, 'Well, it's Friday evening. I'll go downtown and get the money out of the bank and bring it to that lady.' She lived close to downtown. And I forgot my bank book at home. I walked

with Iris on my arm; I didn't go on the bus. I walked from 107 Avenue and 109 Street to the Commerce Bank on Jasper Avenue and 101 Street – that big old Commerce Bank, it's still there. And when I came there the teller said, 'There is no money in your account.' I hardly could speak English but I said, 'It is in there. I didn't take it out and my husband didn't take it out.' And I said, 'I forgot the bank book at home.' I walked back and come back because it was Friday night so the bank was open till six. I went home, took the bank book and went downtown again, with the baby on my arm. When I came there she said, 'You have no money in the bank,' but she can't explain it. 'It has been taken out.' I started crying. I said, 'I don't know what to do. I need that money.' And she just couldn't help me. She just didn't give me the money. But I went home. So that was that.

Then Saturday night my husband came home about 11 o'clock. I was scared. I didn't even want to open the door because I hadn't heard from him and I didn't know who was on the door. I opened the door and it was my husband with a great big red beard and he was half frozen to death. He had come from Winnipeg. And he told me he didn't have any money to go home on the Greyhound bus. So he got the idea to have that money wired from Edmonton to Winnipeg and it still wasn't enough. So he had sold his new axe and his new saw and everything he had in that suitcase – he gave it away for just a couple of dollars, so he could get home with that money. So then he came on Greyhound bus he came to Edmonton, was 25 below zero that night and he didn't have any money to go home with a taxi so he walked home from the Greyhound bus depot to 107 Avenue and 109 Street and he was just frozen. The next day he said that he would explain it to me all what happened in that bush camp. They couldn't make any money and the food was more expensive than they got for the lumber paid. So they were in the hole just in a couple of weeks. And he said if he would have stayed longer, they would have never been able to get out of there again. So he called it quits and he just took his things and took off. And he got into a fight with the other two fellows that went with him and they were still there in Winnipeg. They wanted to wait until the guy that owned that lumber camp came and measured their lumber and want to get paid for it. But my husband he just left everything there and he didn't get paid nothing and he just came home. So he got into a fight with them two guys and I thought, 'Well, that's nothing new!' He would fight with everybody that I know. Anybody that came into contact with him he always got into a fight. So I thought already when he left that's what will happen. And so he said therefore I am not allowed to talk to my best friend in my foolish way anymore– I'm not allowed to go and visit her, I'm not allowed to phone her and I'm never allowed to see her again. I said, 'She borrowed me baby clothes so that I don't have to buy any baby clothes for our baby because for her three weeks old baby the clothes were still too big. So she said I should use it for awhile and when they get too small for my baby I should give it back to her.' I just had visit her that same afternoon and he says first he didn't want me to. I argued with him for awhile. I said, 'It's not fair that all of a sudden my only friend, the only person that I can talk to in German, I'm not allowed to see her anymore. And she would be wondering why I don't bring the clothes back or don't come and see her.' We didn't have no telephone that time. But he insisted if I be back in half an hour then I could go and bring the baby clothes back. And I said, 'You mean I should just throw it on her doorstep and leave? She would want to know what her husband is doing or when he is coming back. And so I just want to talk to her for a couple of minutes. And the bus doesn't sit right there when I come to the bus stop. You usually have to wait for awhile.' So he said okay, a half an hour and I'd better be back. So I went and she want to give me a cup of coffee. I said, 'Magda, I have to be back in half an hour.' When I told her that I was not allowed to see her ever again I had to start crying and she cried too. Because we were so close friends. We knew each other for a couple of years and she didn't have any other friends either. So she said, 'Well, he is your husband and you have to do what he says, so we might see each other sometimes, maybe downtown or in a store or somewhere. And in the meantime, you'll just have to do what he says.' So when I came home he didn't want to open the door. We had just a wooden

> door on the outside and it didn't have no key to open. It just had a padlock – when we left to shopping we just put the padlock on. But for overnight it just had a hook inside. I arrived on that door and it was so tight closed that it didn't even rattle hardly. And I kept yelling and I kept screaming and I said, 'I want to get inside.' It was over 20 below fahrenheit, and it was really cold. I didn't even wear any slacks because I didn't own any slacks so I just had my nylons and my light summer coat on and just shoes. I didn't have no boots. And he didn't let me in. I rattled on that door. It was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon and it was getting dark and I was still outside. I was nearly frozen to death. I heard the baby crying. I knocked on the window and I told him, 'Open the door! The baby is crying! I have to get in!' And he says, 'You stayed longer than I said and therefore you stay outside. You go back to those people if you like them so much. You had to go, and so you go back and stay back there.' I said, 'I want my baby,' and I cried. When I think about it, I still remember like it was yesterday. I rattled and rattled on that door till the hook fell off. I was nearly frozen to death. I had to go on my knees and beg him to let me stay. He wanted me to pack a suitcase and, 'Get the hell out of here,' he said. And he don't give me the baby. I told that to the judge when I was on the witness stand, what he already did to me.

For several years Heidi worked as a seamstress in the GWG factory because her husband was unable to get work. She didn't like this arrangement because he abused the children and she worried about them.

> So my oldest daughter, she was so scared. My husband hit my oldest daughter already when she was a baby. And I remember one time she just had learned to walk and I had been working. I came home from work and he told me that she was bull-headed and I said, 'Why was she bull-headed?' And he said she has to walk until he feels that she is not bull-headed anymore. So she was supposed to walk up and down the living room all the time and she was so tired already, her eyes almost fell asleep and she cried and cried. And I felt so sorry for her. And then I spoke up and I said, 'Well, that's enough now. Leave that baby alone; she is just a year old; she just learned to walk! Why do you have to bother her so much?' And he told me that I had nothing to say, that I am working and that he is the babysitter and if I don't shut up he is going to beat me up. I felt like I want to quit working but I knew I couldn't because he didn't have no job and he only worked in summer, just sometimes for a couple of months. Most of the time it wasn't enough to get unemployment in winter. So he had to wait until after Christmas. In those days, ones that didn't have enough stamps then, they just get unemployment after Christmas. So I couldn't quit working. I had to keep on working because we had to make mortgage payment. We had bought a little house and we had to pay $50 each month and buy the groceries. And in those days I just made $21 a week. So there was nothing else to do but keep on going. One time he took Iris out, she had her cheeks frozen. He took her out in winter and he just put her snowsuit on and he didn't dress her up warm enough – he didn't put no scarf or mittens on. She had white spots on her cheeks and her nose was frozen. I had to take her then to the clinic and they gave me some cream and tell me to rub the cheeks hard and if it didn't get the colour back then I should bring her in for a check-up again. But I wouldn't dare go to the doctor because it cost $5 a visit those days and we didn't have no insurance. So, well, my husband was the babysitter. I experienced lots of times hard winters. I always was scared of winter because I knew my husband was staying home and I had to go to work and I was always afraid to leave the kids with him.

In later years Heidi worked as a cleaning woman so that she could keep her youngest child with her. This seemed like an ideal situation: her daughter was safe with her, and she would no longer have to work evenings in the factory where the work was stressful

and the pay low. Heidi responded to the needs of one of her tenants – to care for the woman's children – so quit her cleaning jobs to babysit. All the while she continued to manage, maintain and clean the houses she had helped to build.

> My youngest daughter was about five years old – until she started school, I took her two years with me to work. I did housework, because I was scared to leave her with my husband, because I didn't know what he was going to do with her. So I took her along with me. Everywhere I started to I asked them. Like I went first to unemployment office and I didn't want to go sewing anymore because I earned just 50¢ an hour and you had to work really hard. It was so hard on my nerves. I worked in GWG – that was the worst place of all. And I did evening shift because I made my things ready during the day: I washed clothes, I made the meals, and I made supper so I had everything ready, and fed the kids before I went to evening shift. So the kids went to bed by themselves. But then I thought, 'Well, that's no good for all the time', so in springtime I always had to quit when my husband started working. And in 1964 and 1965 I did housework. I asked the people if I could bring my little girl along. I told them, 'She is really good and I took some toys along.' She sat in the corner always and she just watched me. When it was noon time she fell asleep on the chesterfield or someplace in the basement, and until she woke up I almost was ready, and then we went home together. Then in 1965 we had tenants that lived in the same house that we did, in the downstairs suite. And her husband had left her and she had two little boys and she had asked all the neighbourhood for somebody to babysit and nobody wants them two little kids. The youngest one was just three months old and the bigger boy was four years old. Her parents lived in Lethbridge and she didn't want to go home to Lethbridge. She said maybe her husband and her will get back together again; maybe they just need a little bit time away from each other. Her husband worked in a bank; he was assistant bank manager. And I was so stunned. I never heard them fight and all of a sudden it was really quiet for a couple of days and I heard Yvonne crying. And then she came to see me upstairs and she cried a lot and so I asked her, 'What's the matter?' And she said her husband left her and she has nobody that look after her kids and she doesn't want to go on welfare – she is too proud to go on welfare – if I would take her kids. Well, I was reluctant to take them because I was glad that mine had grown up and the youngest one just had started school, but then I felt so sorry for her. So I quit my housework and I told her that I would babysit and I stay home. So she gave me $10 a week and I stayed home and babysit. Well, I had lots of work at home. I always did the bookkeeping in winter and did a lot of sewing in winter. So I babysit those two boys, I brought them up for six years. They were just like my own. I took them everywhere I went, everywhere I worked. When I went painting and house cleaning in my own places, I took them along with me. And then Yvonne met a fellow and she got married and then they bought a house and they moved away. And the boys still come and see me; every Christmas they come and visit me, the whole family. She got two more children so she has four and she is very happily married. She said it worked out for her all right.

Heidi's marriage continued to deteriorate. She describes herself as a slave and her husband as a field marshall. Again she thought of leaving him but was restricted by a number of factors. As was the case in the early years of their marriage, her family was in Europe, she had no friends in Canada, and she didn't know about welfare. Further she had noted amongst her tenants that the families with a father had fewer difficulties with their children, so she assumed that life without a father for her children might be even

more difficult than it already was. As well, she didn't want her children, who were the most important part of her life, to ever accuse her of depriving them of their father. So she reasoned with herself that she would try harder to make the marriage work, and if it didn't get better she would leave him when the children were older.

> But for me it got worse from year to year and I felt I was just like a slave to my husband. He was just like a field marshall in our house. When he woke up I didn't know from day to day what new instructions he is going to give me and what new rules were coming up. Everytime a day came up I was scared of every day. I thought lots of times of leaving him but my family was in Europe and I didn't have anybody here and I never had heard of welfare until maybe about 10 years ago when we had tenants that were on welfare. But I would have never gone on welfare because I knew we had three houses already and I don't have to go on welfare. I thought, 'Well, if he doesn't want me anymore he could give me a house and I could live in there and I could bring up my kids.'. But then I thought it's very hard because I seen from other women that lived in our houses how hard it is to bring up young kids just by a mother. Sometimes they don't listen, sometimes they don't want to go to school and sometimes they want to go out. And if there is just a mother, well they don't want to listen so good. When there is a father things work out better.' And I thought always, 'I don't want to ever be accused by the kids of taking away their father.' They would say when they grow up it must have been my fault, I didn't try hard enough, they had to grow up without a father. And I didn't like that idea. So I thought always, 'Well, I wait. Maybe when the oldest one – she was quite hard-headed, just like my husband – when the oldest one gets through her teenage years maybe then it will get better.' I knew our son was so good. He should have been a girl instead of a boy, he was so soft-hearted. He wouldn't hurt a fly. He would never talk back to his father, while the oldest daughter, she tried sometimes to explain to him and he wouldn't hear nothing of that. He had to be always right. And no matter how hard she tried in school or with her friends or doing her homework or helping me with the housework, he always put her down. He never told her that this is good or she did well in school. When she brought the report card home, I always praised her when I seen her marks were good, but to her dad the marks were never good enough. He always put her down. She hated that. But for me I thought, 'Well, I go on.' I knew it had to be an end. I knew I couldn't go on like that for the rest of my life. I just didn't know how it would end or when I should end it.

Heidi explains that she tried to keep peace in the family and to protect the children from their father's abuse. This seemed particularly necessary with her eldest daughter, Iris, who tended to fight back against her father's unreasonable demands.

> So the years went by and I tried to forget. I never reminded him of things like that because I knew he would get mean again. So I always tried to keep peace. And when the kids grew up, when the oldest one was in junior high school, and she must have been in grade nine, she want to go to a high school dance and he didn't want to let her go. She kept asking and asking, she said her girl friend Linda she is going and other girls are going and she would want to go too and dance too. She wants to see what it is like. So he finally said yes she could go but she is supposed to be home by 11 o'clock. But she didn't want to walk home by herself. She said she had to wait till the other girls were walking home with her. So she was about an hour late. Oh he was raving mad at home. He screamed and yelled when she comes home he locked the door already. And he said to me he wouldn't let her in when she comes home. She should stay where she was and she wasn't supposed to come in the house anymore. My heart was just pounding. The other two

kids had gone to bed. So when Iris came I had snuck to the door and opened the door lock, real quietly so he didn't hear me that I went down; he was watching television. I thought when she comes home that she can get at least in the house. And when she opened the door and she came in and he went there with a stick and he want to hit her and I pleaded with him not to hit her. I said, 'It's the first time she went and she is a bit late and she said she is sorry and she won't be late again.' He insisted that she takes her suitcase and leaves the house and never comes back in. And the other kids got up; they woke up and they started crying and they pleaded with him, 'Dad, please let Iris stay.' So I had to go on my knees again and beg to let us all stay in our house. And I said, 'This is unreal!' She had to promise never go out again. And she wasn't allowed to go anyplace, not to a show – lots of times she asked him if she could go to a show. He said, 'No! You stay home! You didn't come home one time and therefore this is the punishment as long as you go to school.' She was not allowed to go anyplace. She was bitter against her dad. Oh, she was so bitter. And I didn't blame her. But I always kept telling her she should finish her school and then go to work. She would have wanted to go to university too but she said she couldn't take this treatment. He hit her several times but I always protected them as much as I could.

Heidi and her family made plans to travel to Germany the summer after Iris finished high school. She describes how her husband threatened first her daughters and then herself by forbidding them to go on the holiday.

But then in 1973, Iris finished high school and it was just about a month before she had to write the final exams. We had made plans to go to Germany on a holiday, the whole family. We had started planning it already on Christmas. I bought for everybody two new suitcases for Christmas and everybody was just looking forward to that trip. And I said, 'We should go on a trip all together; that would be the last time that the whole family would be together. If Iris is now finished school, she might start working; she might too get a boyfriend and get married, and we'll never go together again.' And Hans was already 16 that time. He just had two more years of high school and he wanted to go to university so I said, 'Well, things will be different when one is finished school.' But he kept aggravating everybody before we went on that trip and the slightest thing that the kids said that he didn't like, he right away said to the girls – first he started with Iris – she was not allowed to go on that trip; she was to stay home all by herself. And she cried. She cried always. She says, 'Mom, do I really have to stay home all by myself? I want to go too.' And then a week or so later, he started the same thing with Anna. He told her too that she can't go on the trip. And I said, 'Listen! They are all looking forward to the trip. We worked so hard.' Because every summer holiday the kids were not allowed to go anyplace. They had to go to work with him to masonry jobs. He didn't hire any helpers anymore; he took the kids along every day and they had to stay with him until late at night till it was dark. And they never got paid. He always said, 'When they get married, they will get a house for that, so they should just keep on working.' And he puts all the money in the bank and when he has again money about $7000 or $8000, he bought again another old house. So he invested all the time the money. And the girls, they were really upset. They just hardly talked anymore. They were just waiting from day to day, that time gets closer and maybe he will let them go. About 60 days before our departure I had paid the whole fare for the whole family and he agreed to it that I could make out the cheque, because it was a charter flight so we had to pay 60 days ahead. But still he kept telling the girls that they were not allowed to go. He said he don't care if he loses the money, they are not allowed to go. And they were crying so hard. I said, 'I don't know, I don't care anymore either. If you are not allowed to go, I don't want to go either. I am going to stay home with you because it seems like this whole trip is falling apart.' Until the last day he did that to us, he did to the kids and to me, that we were not allowed to go.

> He told me too that I was not allowed to go. And then Hans said, 'Well, if Mom doesn't go and the girls are not allowed to go, I don't want to go either.' So he said, 'So what? We all stay home.' But we had our suitcases; everybody packed. We all said, 'Just in case we can go, we have them ready!' I'll tell you, I didn't believe it until we were at the airport, until the plane took off, that we were really going.

The trip to Germany did transpire and Heidi was able to see her family and tell them about her life. Just prior to the end of the vacation her husband "started to get real mean," call her names, and accuse her of being a whore, in front of her family. However, when her sister asked her to stay in Germany, Heidi answered that she must go back so that her son could get a university education.

> When we came to Germany and I seen my family I couldn't believe it. I told my sister – my father was still alive that time – 'What he is doing to us is unreal. He is keeping us like slaves. We have to go work every day with him and we are not allowed to have any fun or any say in any case.' I was really upset too because three days before we were leaving in Germany he started a big fight with my sister and my bother-in-law. They asked us in the evening, we come to her livingroom and just sit together and talk because they knew that in three days we were leaving. And we were travelling quite a bit in Germany. We didn't have much time together. So she said, 'In the evening come into the livingroom and we'll talk.' But we just had started and all of a sudden Deiter started to get real mean and he called me names and he accused me of all kinds of things. My sister and my brother-in-law and my brother and his wife, they were there too, they couldn't believe it, what he was all saying about me. That I was a whore, and that I was a good-for-nothing, and that I whore around with all the neighborhood men, and all of these things. I couldn't believe that this is all coming out of my husband's mouth. I cried. And I listened to him for maybe about an hour. I couldn't take it anymore. I said I'm going to bed. The kids had been asleep already. And my brother-in-law said to Deiter – he doesn't know him very well because we have lived 25 years in Canada already and he just had known my husband for maybe a year and not too good at that time – he said, 'But you should quit talking about Heidi like that because I know her for many years and she is not like that, what you are saying.' And my brother said too, 'I don't believe what is coming out of your mouth. If you don't quit right now talking, I am going home.' And my brother-in-law said, 'If I didn't know that you are leaving in three days I would throw you out of this house right now.' So I went to bed. I said, 'Good night,' and then my husband came upstairs too. Next day my sister, she invited us for supper and he didn't go. He was just laying in bed all day, my husband. He didn't go anyplace no more with us and he didn't talk to anybody and he was just plain mean.
> My husband had really gone mad three days before we left there and my sister and her husband, they told me, 'How can you go back to Canada with this guy? He is so mean to you; he has nothing good to say about you. We know that it isn't so. Why do you go back with him? Stay here! Stay with us and let him go!' And I said, 'I can't!' Our son – he was 16 at that time – he had two more years of high school to go, and he had made up his mind years before, he was an honor student since grade five, and he wanted to go to university. So I told my sister, 'I can't destroy that for him. He is such a good boy. I have to do that for him. I have to go back and I have to suffer and I have to stay with my husband and I have to pretend the best I can. And I have to take whatever he hands out to me until that boy is finish university. And I hope my nerves will take it until the day he is finished.'
> So in three days we went on the flight home and when we came home, he started all over again – that I had ruined the whole holiday trip and that he would never go on holidays with any of us again, that would be the last time. And I said to my kids, 'I knew it, that this would be the last holiday trip and

> that he would never take us again anyplace else. But that's all right. We just keep on going from day to day and see what happens.'

The abuse Heidi suffered in front of her family in Germany was also experienced in front of some Canadian friends, upon their return home. Her friends' protestations resulted in her husband decreeing that the friendship could not be continued.

> We had friends – they had been friends with us since 1956. When we came back from Germany in 1973 they came to visit us that same evening we had come home. Because before we left George had asked my husband if we visit his mother in Germany. She lived in the Black Forest and he hadn't see his mom for a long time. And so my husband had said, 'Yeah, we can drive by there and visit and say hello and then we'll tell you how she is doing.' So he was so anxious to hear how his mom is. So I had told them what day we would come back, so they came right away the first evening. And that evening, he started too, my husband, to make me look so bad – that I would be a whore and that I would kiss every man that comes close to me and all that garbage, and that I spoiled the whole holidays in Germany for him. And that all was a lie. And George listened for a while, he said, 'Deiter, listen! Heidi is not like that. I know her better than that. I know her for 20 years and she is not like that. What you are saying? That isn't true!' And they both had one or two drinks, and so Deiter got mad at him and he said he is not going to be told by him what he can or not do in his own house. And then George said, 'Well, okay, okay, you can say or do whatever you like in your own house, but I just want to tell you that you see Heidi crying already, I don't know why you're doing this to her.' And he went outside with Deiter; he wanted a pail of sand in his car for in winter when it gets slippery that he has some weight in his trunk. So they went outside together and Wilma, my friend, she stayed in the house and she shaked her head and she said, 'What's the matter with Deiter? He never talked like that before about you.' And I said, 'I don't know either. He did this in Germany; he spoiled the holiday. My brother-in-law almost threw him out of his house and he told me he never allowed that in his house ever again. I could come and visit anytime but not Deiter anymore. He don't want to see him. So Wilma said, 'Well, maybe he had a drink too much; maybe he'll be all right again next day. Just don't say nothing anymore to him; just let him be and maybe he'll straighten out himself.' But he didn't. Next day I had to phone Wilma and George to tell them that they are not allowed to come in our house anymore; that our friendship would be finish and I was not allowed to phone her or talk. And I didn't until 1979 when I moved in here in this suite. Then I phoned her up again and we are good friends again. She said she wouldn't have come to our place anymore anyway.

Heidi explains how some years prior her husband had also forbidden her to go to church, and to associate with her friends that did go. She describes living with his rules and regulations as similar to army life.

> And I had another friend, her name is Helga and her husband's name is Adolf. They always came to visit. We three couples were really close friends for about 20 years. Both couples go to church on Sunday and I was not allowed to go to church since our kids were small. That was about 1964. My little one was about four years old – that was the last time I was allowed to go to church. He forbidden me to go to church. I took them sometimes to Sunday School and he said when I came home, 'That's the last time you go to church. This stupid people, they make you all haywire, all them ministers. They ought to be hung by their feet, and the people that go to church they are all stupid and crazy. And you are one of them.' So I'm not allowed to go to church no more. He says, 'If you go one more time I throw you out of the house.' I'm supposed to clean his shoes or cut the grass or weed the garden in that time.

> That would be much smarter than running to church. So I couldn't go anymore. I felt really sad. Every Sunday I used to dress up and I see the people in the neighbourhood walking by to church, and I had to cut grass or clean shoes in that time. And our kids were not allowed to go to confirmation or nothing. He said, 'They don't need that. They'd better do homework in that time; that would be smarter than taking them to church.' So whenever our friends had come over in the years before, then we talked for awhile but as soon as the subject came up about church – because both couples go to church every Sunday, not to the same church but they have each their own church they go to – and as soon as the subject of church-going came up, my husband really got out of hand. And they didn't like that so therefore they said they have nothing in common with him. They don't even want to come to our house anymore. They would want to come and visit me but not him. So in 1973 I had to tell them that they are not allowed to come anymore and that our friendship is over. So he destroyed every friendship that I had. And I was not allowed to talk to any neighbours – I just could talk to neighbours when he didn't see me, when he was out someplace or I was in the back yard in one of our houses and the neighbours were cutting grass and I was cutting grass, so we'd talk across the fence a little bit. But otherwise I never was allowed into any neighbour's house. He wanted to keep us away from everything; that only he was the ruler and the boss and well, he acted like a field marshall. Sometimes I thought we are in the army, you know. So we just had to. When he went to work on masonry jobs he got up a bit earlier, but when he didn't go to work he got up at noon time when the kids came home for lunch. And then he made new rules and regulation. Every day I was scared of what coming next out of his mouth. Oh, life was hell!

Heidi's husband continued in his erratic and abusive behaviour. As a result Heidi's mental health began to deteriorate. Still she kept working and trying to ignore her problems, determined to carry on.

> And things got really rough when we got back from Germany. Oh my nerves nearly collapsed! Because my mom had passed away and my dad had made appointment with a lawyer and so he was waiting for me to come. He said all three kids, my sister, my brother and me, we have to be together with my dad at the lawyer's office and then the bank account that my mom had would be divided. Which was very small. We just got 850 marks. That would be about half of it in dollars – about $400. I gave that to my sister but I asked my husband first if that is all right and he said, 'Yeah, that's all right.' Then my brother was only 18. My sister built a house in Germany and my brother was not of age, so therefore he was not allowed to sign out the mortgage and my dad signed out the mortgage. My brother made the house payments but my brother owned nothing. And my brother did most of the carpentry work on that house and he felt like really funny. He says he is now 40 years old and he still don't own nothing. It's all in my dad's name. He said, 'My mom passed away already and what if our dad passes away and everything is on his name? It will belong to the state.' So he said when we go to the lawyer, we should talk it out. So we should all get together with my dad and tell him that he should sign part of that house over to him. So then I said, 'I never contributed nothing to your house. I got eight houses in Canada, I don't need nothing of your house anyway. So my part should go to my brother and sister.' So I asked my husband and he said he agreed and so we signed our part away when we were there. But when we came back to Canada from that visit, my husband nearly got out of his mind. I had to write my sister that this agreement should not be valid. My husband wants the part again. Oh, I cried and cried. I says, 'How can you do that to me? Say one thing and mean another thing?' But I kept on working. My nerves were really bad and my husband kept telling me that I wrecked the whole holiday over there and I am so stupid and I am an idiot and I belong to the crazy house. He called me all kinds of names. Oh, I got so depressed! But I stayed with it and I thought,

> 'Well, that can't go on too long any more.' That was in 1973. Well we went on holidays in 1974 but it really wasn't anymore the same. His sister had come over for a visit but I pretended everything was okay. And then every second summer we build another garage so we kept on working, but things weren't the same anymore.

Heidi's family took one last trip together and again her husband exhibited erratic, abusive behavior. She realizes now, but did not know at the time, that his erratic behavior was related to his not having sexual access to their youngest daughter, Anna.

> So in 1976 we went again on a holiday trip. We had bought a camper in 1974 and we went in 1976 on a California trip. We went 25 days travelling. We never stayed more than a day in the same place and we usually stayed in campgrounds. We went in 1976 with our big camper, the whole family together, went on a California trip. We left right after the kids finished school and we went for 25 days. It was the American bicentennial year so we went first to Spokane and then we went to Couer D'Alene and we watched the bicentennial celebration in Coeur D'Alene. Then we went to visit Lewis and Clarke caverns and we went to Salt Lake City, and we went to Grand Canyon. That was really nice. The whole family was happy. Then we stayed in the Brice Canyon overnight, when we went to Las Vegas. Still everybody was happy. Everybody enjoyed it. It was really hot too. We stayed in Las Vegas in the Stardust Hotel and they had a campground in the back of the hotel and they had a swimming pool and after 10 o'clock the swimming pool got closed, and then we went out for supper and then we went to see all the hotels in downtown Las Vegas. We stayed up till 4 o'clock in the morning. It seems like in Las Vegas everybody is up all night and sleeping all day. In daytime you hardly could see a person on the street. Then we went to Los Angeles. We had friends in Los Angeles, in Diamond Bar, and my friend she took a day off and she took us to Universal Studio and next day she took us to Disneyland and then we stayed one day at her house, just roaming around in the swimming pool and then we took off again. We went to San Diego and we visited the San Diego Zoo and we visited then Marineland and then we started our way back. And we visited the Queen Mary; it was docked in Long Beach. And that day my husband was really funny again. We went in the morning to the boat and he went separate – he went a different way. He never even told anybody. Me and the kids we were together and all of a sudden nobody knew where Dad was. And we didn't see him all day. And we couldn't figure out where he was. The kids went sometimes different directions looking out for him and then we met each other on a certain place. But we couldn't see him. We had waited for maybe about two hours at the entrance, we thought he must be waiting at the entrance. And everybody was upset during the day because he went out by himself and he didn't say nothing. So I said to the kids, 'Oh, oh! Some argument is going to come up again.' And then we went back to our camper and there he was laying in the camper, sleeping. And then he woke up when we opened the camper and he started to argue again and he said that we went a different way and he was all day by himself. I said, 'No, you went a different way. We were all together. But we couldn't find you. All day we were looking for you and everybody was worried. Where you were?' And from that moment on, he was starting to get weird again. And I never knew why he always got so weird. That happened several times in a month. First I thought, 'He is worse than a woman.' I never got upset or so want to argue all the time when I got my period, but it seems like he got it. But I couldn't understand it, why he always got so weird. And on the way home on that trip, every day it was just like living with an enemy. Everything aggravated him. You couldn't do nothing right. You couldn't say nothing right. The kids were afraid to open their mouth. Everytime somebody just started talking he told them to shut up and everybody wished we were already back home. Every day was just hell! And I didn't understand it, but now I know why. Having sex with me wasn't good enough for him. He wanted to have it with

his daughter and that wasn't possible because the whole family was together. So he got so mean because he couldn't have his way. Since my daughter told me, now I can understand it – why all those arguments happened. He argued sometimes for no reason whatsoever. Just to pick on me. Just to make me mad. So when we came back from that holiday trip – that was by the end of July or beginning of August – my oldest daughter said, 'Mom, I will never go with you on a holiday trip ever again. That was the last time, because Dad is so mean and nasty, nobody can talk to him. And a holiday is supposed to be fun but this is not fun. Everybody is scared of the next day.' So I says, 'Well, I think I won't go on a holiday trip again either. I think that will be the last one.'

Heidi describes an incident where her husband hit her eldest daughter on the head, resulting in a serious injury which almost left her blind. Iris was afraid to tell the doctor what happened – afraid of repercussions from her father. The incident resulted in everyone living in more fear – "like hostages" in their own home.

So from then on things got worse. That same year in November, my daughter was working for the government already for about three years – yeah, she started in 1973, that was 1976. She lived in the downstairs suite of our house. We used to have tenants but then she was working for one year. Then I asked my husband if we could get rid of our tenants. My daughter wanted to move out and I thought, 'As long as I can keep her at home, why can't he share?' I wanted to teach her cooking and sewing – things that she didn't have time or interest while she was going to school. I wanted to teach her a lot of things before she gets married and I thought, 'Someday she'll find a boyfriend and she'll get married and then she doesn't know what to do.' Because in the summertime they always had to go to work with my husband. And I couldn't teach them any cooking when they were going to school; they were always busy doing homework. And usually supper was ready when they came home from school. So that year in November she came home one day from work and I said, 'Iris, you can have supper with us, you don't have to cook for yourself.' And she says, 'Mom, what you got?' I says, 'Well, we all eat the same thing. You just sit down and you'll find it's all right whatever it is.' So she started talking about her job, how the day went. And then my husband had said something and they started kind of arguing. She never was supposed to be right and she knew she was right. She had said something and he didn't like it and he got up and hit her with his bricklayer's hand, four times on the back of the head. Her face fell in the plate of soup that was in front of her and she started crying. She wanted to talk back and I says, 'Iris, you go downstairs and whatever it is you want to argue with Dad, you talk it over when you cool off.' And he was really mad and he says, 'If I hear one more sound out of you I really let you have it. This was just fun but wait until I mean business.' So I said, 'Iris, just go!' And she was crying. And about a week later she said, 'Mom, I can't see part of my eye; it's kind of blank. When the buses come I hardly can read the numbers.' I says, 'Well, maybe you have a cold on your eye; I don't know what it is. But if it doesn't get better within a day or two you should go and see an eye doctor right away. You have health insurance and you have had to pay for it; go and see a doctor. Maybe it's nothing. But have a check-up anyway.' So she complained from day to day that her blank spot moves toward the middle, that the blank spot gets bigger. And I got worried and she said she made an appointment today and she is going to see the doctor today. So she didn't come home from work like she usually did. About six o'clock – usually she was home at five – all of a sudden the phone rang. It was a nurse from the Royal Alex hospital and she says, 'Your daughter is in hospital and she has to have an emergency eye operation. Would you bring her things?' I was so shocked I started crying. I said, 'What is happening?' And so I dressed up, I was just going to eat supper, and my husband drove me and we went to see her and she had her eyes taped up and she was not allowed to move. She was to lay still all night on the same spot and she had a medication and she

was scheduled for operation in the morning. She was so upset she was crying. She said the doctor had asked her what happened, but she was afraid to tell the doctor that her dad hit her last week on the back of the head. So the doctor told her – she was examined by a eye specialist – that the retina popped loose and it was just hanging on a wee little string and if that breaks loose, she would be blind of that eye. So she was going to have a laser operation and she was so scared to death. It was her first time in her life in hospital. She never had been in hospital before and she never been in a hospital room. They had brought her in there with the taped up eyes and she couldn't see and she didn't know where her glasses were. She didn't need them but she was worried where her glasses were; they didn't give her her glasses back. So she said that I should stay with her. The nurse told me that she has to go to sleep and they will give her medication for sleeping and they would prepare her for the operation; that I couldn't stay with her. But I could be coming back to visit her before she goes to the operating table and that I could stay there when she comes back so that she knows that I am there. So a little bit later they had moved her from the Royal Alex to the Charles Camsell because they had found out that there is no operating time left in the Royal Alex for the next day, but in the Camsell hospital there would be. So they moved here with ambulance to the Camsell hospital and she was worried all the time that I wouldn't know where she was. The nurse phoned me that they had moved her but she said not to come tonight anymore, to come and visit her tomorrow. So Iris had been crying all night that they almost couldn't operate on her because her eyes were all swollen up. So I went early, I think six o'clock in the morning. They called me to come and stay with her because she is so upset. They had left her on a stretcher in an empty room with her eyes taped up, freezing with just a bed sheet covering her. And they had forgotten about her, that she is in that room. I tell you, that was something else! I waited there until she came back from the operating room and I had to stay with her for two full days and nights. She just wouldn't let go of my hand because she was so scared that she would get blind because of her father. Oh it was so hard. The doctor, he asked her afterwards again, 'Who did this to you? Did you fall? Did you slip?' Because it was in December 10, 1976. It had snow outside already and the streets were icy. And she said no, she didn't fall or she didn't slip; she didn't know how it happened. But she was scared to tell because she was still living at home and she didn't know what that would do to her, if she would have said Dad hit her on the head when the eyeball popped loose. So when Anna heard that, she wouldn't dare open her mouth anymore because she was afraid that the same thing would happen to her and she wouldn't want to be blind for the rest of her life. The same with my son and the same with me. So we lived like hostages in the house. So that was in 1976.

Heidi describes how she continued working hard alongside her husband. His behavior continued to be erratic and controlling. When her eldest daughter planned to marry, he initially showed enthusiasm, landscaping the yard to make ready for the relatives who would come from Europe. However, he did not approve of Heidi making the bridesmaid dresses, insisting she help him work instead. Determined, Heidi made the dresses without him knowing.

In 1977 we worked all summer on our house. We didn't go anyplace on holiday; we just worked every day. We put bricks, about 10,000 bricks, on our house that we lived. And we got it finish when the snow fell. That was 1977. And in 1978 in Easter time, my oldest daughter Iris, she told me that she wants to get married. She was engaged and her boyfriend came over with her and they told us that they were gonna plan the wedding if I would help her. And I said sure, I will help her, give her a nice wedding. So we started planning and my husband said, 'Well sit down and write to all the

> relatives in Europe, that they can plan their holidays, that they should all come to the wedding.' So my daughter asked me if I would make her the bridesmaid dresses and as soon as my husband heard about making bridesmaid dresses he says, 'No way!' There is so much work to do,' and I have to help him every day – that he wants to fix up the yard real nice before all the wedding guests come. So he bought three spruce trees and he planted them outside and he did a lot of landscaping. He made it real nice but I had to help him every day. And he took once in a while a repair job, a masonry job, and I had to go with him because the kids were in school. And I want to make those bridesmaid dresses. So whenever I just mention something about the wedding, anything, he says she should do it and not me. I'm supposed to help him every day and she should plan and do whatever needs to be done herself. But Iris was working all day and in the evening there wasn't much time. She had to make supper and clean her house and so I said, 'I will make you the bridesmaid dresses.' So I had to make them without my husband knowing it. I sewed sometimes a little bit in the evening: I cut the patterns out and I basted together. And on Sunday when he was watching television then I started sewing, or in the evening I did a little bit sewing. So when it came to the part that the girls were supposed to come and try them on if they fit – she had four bridesmaids – so I had to get the material over to her house and they were not allowed to come to my house and try them on. So Iris had to make them fit and then I sewed again; whenever I could I sewed the rest of it. My daughter, she was amazed. She said, 'Mom, how did you do it? All of a sudden those dresses are finished.' And I said, 'Well, where there is a will, there is a way, and I found a way to do it.'

Prior to the wedding Heidi's husband reversed his decision to support the wedding and once again became extremely abusive, deploring the wedding and threatening to kill Heidi if she didn't leave. Heidi coped by trying to ignore her husband and staying away to work at cleaning and painting her tenant's houses. Again she rationalizes staying in the marriage for the sake of the children – for Iris's wedding and for Han's and Anna's university careers.

> So I had written to everybody and the replies came back and I paid the hall, the supper, I paid about $800 – we had about 250 wedding guests – and we paid the photographer and the band; everything was arranged. And then about two weeks before the wedding Iris told me that the parcel opening would be at our house on Sunday afternoon. And my husband heard that when she said it. Then he blew his top. Oh, was he mad! He just threw things around the house and he said he is going to throw everybody out of the house and especially me. He said he had it with me. This is all my doing and he doesn't want no wedding in the first place and that I have to be out of the house by Saturday, and that was Monday evening when that happened. I thought he was a wild man. I was stunned! And he stood in front of me and he pointed at me – and I just still see him – and he said, 'You be out of the house by Saturday. I don't want ever to see you again. You can go up to the moon or you can go out and eat grass. Grass would be nice and green now. You can go to hell. I don't ever want to see you again.' And I said, 'What about the wedding?' He said he don't care about the wedding as long as I am gone. If the guests come, they can help themselves, whatever there is to eat. And if she wants to have a wedding she can make it herself or whatever, as long as I am not there. Oh I cried and cried. And my youngest daughter she said, 'Mom, you have to do something about this. You can't go on like that. He ruins your nerves completely.' I just was crying. I had all the time my eyes so swollen up. I couldn't sleep; I couldn't eat. And in daytime I had to go out and work with him. There were tenants moving at the same time, two of them, so I just ignored him. I didn't talk to him at all. I just took my paint pail and my cleaning pail and rags and paintbrush and aluminum ladder, and I went

every day from morning to night and I didn't even come home. I just came home in the evening when I knew the kids were home and then I made something to eat. But otherwise I stayed always at the places where I had to clean and paint. And so our neighbours, they were cutting grass, that was the next day, and I walked past their house to one of our houses where I want to go and clean and paint, and they seen me. My eyes looked all red and swollen up and they said, 'Mrs.Schultz, what is happening to you? What's the matter?' I said, 'My husband is going to throw me out of the house. He told me if I'm not gone by Saturday he will kill me. I don't have no place to go and I have everything arranged for Iris's wedding and all the people will start coming next week and he said I should go to hell. But I keep on cleaning and painting and I am not going to talk to him and maybe he will leave me alone. And I just hope that Saturday goes by and he forgets about what he said because I can't go now. Hans is still going to university and if I go away from the house like he says I have to, then who would pay his university? He doesn't have no money. And Anna is just finish high school. She wants to go to university and I don't want to spoil it for her. And I sure want Iris to have her wedding day. I don't care what happens after.' So the wedding guests all came. I was so upset but I pretended nothing was wrong. But some of them, my brother-in-law from Germany and my sister-in-law, they asked me what's wrong with me, so I told them. I said, 'Deiter is so mean to me. If I don't go out of the house by Saturday (but I said it was last Saturday) he was going to kill me. So I have to take whatever he hands me out as long as I don't spoil Iris's wedding. But I don't know what will happen after.'

Once the wedding was over, Heidi's husband again focused on work - compulsive work that took precedence over Heidi's health. During this time he threatened again to throw her out of her house.

So the wedding guests had left. And then tenants had complained in one of the houses that the steps are so bad that they almost broke their legs. They were wooden steps and they should have been replaced long time ago. So he said when the wedding guests were gone, 'Let's go to work. There is work to do.' Me and Anna - Anna still had summer holidays - we had to go with him to work. Hans, he had started in an engineering firm that summer, so he wasn't at home anymore to work. He only was living still at home. So we worked on those steps. We made new front steps and we made new back steps on that house and we poured about 12 foot wide patios all around that house because he had water in that house one year, and he said that should never happen again, so we poured concrete. He always said when he made lots of money during the year with masonry business that we have to have more expenses, so he bought all that concrete and truck and we worked there from morning till night, day after day until the snow fell. We made so much concrete around that house. We had to dig up first for the foundations of the steps. One time he didn't brace those steps right, the forms for the steps, and the concrete truck had to about half way empty, and all of a sudden the whole braces gave way and the whole concrete was all flowing away. So we worked almost all night to get it back together again and the concrete in the meantime got almost hard and we had to really work. I had blisters all over my hands and I had a woolen sweater on - it was a brown sweater, I remember. It was hot that day. He wouldn't even let me go home to change clothes. I was sweating and I got sore spots under my breasts after that - for weeks it wouldn't heal because I wasn't allowed to change when I was working. I had to keep on working - no time to eat or drink. Just like slaves! Five minutes was too much to go to the bathroom. So when the work slowed down a bit, then I went to the doctor. I was so sore because I was just like open - you could get a half a finger in the sore spots and it hurted so much and it wouldn't heal. And the doctor gave me antibiotic cream so then they healed up. It was about twice that fall when we worked on those steps that he got mad at me for no reason at all, just to bully me around. And he told me that I have to leave, that I should go to hell

> and I should pack my suitcase and go and he don't want to see me the next day anymore. He said the last time he gave me a whole week to pack and find a place but this time he give me only a day or two and if I am not out then he will kick me out or throw me out or do whatever he likes. He throw me out in the middle of the night and lock the door on me and never let me in. And that went on and on.

Heidi finally took some action on her own behalf – she went to see a lawyer. The lawyer helpfully informed her that she had dower rights. However, telling her to stand up for herself demonstrated a lack of understanding of Heidi's desperate situation. Wanting protection for someday in the future when she 'might really need it', Heidi had the lawyer file a caveat.

> I went to see a lawyer, Mrs Goldman – I got to know her just before Iris's wedding when we sold our old house. I took my youngest daughter with me after school. I had an appointment but I didn't tell my husband where I was going; I just said, 'I go to the store.' So I see Mrs. Goldman and I told her and she said, 'Lady, you don't need nothing.' I told her that he wants to throw me out of the house all the time and he says it's his house and I have nothing to say and if I don't do as he says, he'll throw me out. So she said, 'Don't you believe him; you have dower rights. Don't you know what dower rights are?' I said, 'No. Never heard of it.' So she explained it to me. She said, 'You are married to this man?' I says, 'Yeah, for about 26 years.' And she said, 'Well, therefore you are his wife and wherever is your home, that's your home too. And why doesn't he go?' I said, 'I told him that once; if he doesn't like it why doesn't he go? This is my home too.' And he said before he would leave this house he rather kill me. That he would never leave this house; that I have to go. I had no right to be in this house. So she said, 'Well, you don't need nothing. It's your house. Why don't you just tell him so and just don't go and don't do all the time like he says? Stand up for yourself!' So I says, 'That's easy for you to say, but in our house he is the boss and whatever he says goes. And I am just sick of hearing that all the time – it's his house. I want more protection.' And she says, 'Well I could file a caveat.' I said, 'You do that. How much is it?' She says, '$40.' 'Well', I says, '$40, here is $40! File that caveat! Someday it will come to the boiling point and I might really need it.' So she filed that caveat and she said the land title office will send you a copy of it to your house. So I was worried for days that the mailman would deliver that copy and he would grab the mail and he would see it. Then I wouldn't be able to stand another day in that house if he would have found out. So I was lucky. The day the mailman came he was outside and I took the mail in the house and I seen it and I put it away so he didn't know about it. So that was 1978.

Heidi explains that she hated her husband for all of his abusive words and threats against her life, and tells how she lived in terror of him. She describes how he behaved violently toward neighborhood children, and harassed tenants and neighbours, and when confronted by the police, denied these actions. She states that she 'wasn't allowed to say anything' because he was her husband – he was the head of the family, 'the boss'.

> I hated him! I hated him! Because he never called me by my name. He just called me all kinds of names like idiot, or you dummy, or all kinds of stupid names he called me. And he said it in front of the kids. And then he said one time that he will kill me – in front of the kids he said that – and stuff me in a garbage bin. And if somebody would ask him from the neighbourhood where I was, he would tell them I was on holidays and I wouldn't have come back, or

> he wouldn't know where I was. And from then on I got really scared of him. I had to go to work with him on the repair jobs, the masonry repair jobs and whenever I seen those big garbage bins I thought about it. It really terrified me because he always had tools with him.
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> And he was so mean to kids that walked through our yard. Teenagers – he beat them up that they were bleeding all over and his hands were bleeding. But nothing happened! No police came. Sometimes he beat up little kids. One time they had ripped out a little bit of carrots and cabbage in our garden and he had caught them. He beat the daylight out of them. They were bleeding all over and the mother came, and the police came and well, the police gave him a good talk down and they said the mother could sue him and he said well then he would sue them for trespassing. And so the police told him all he is allowed to do is take the water hose and spray them but not beat them up. If they want to they could lay charges against him. But that went on lots of times. He took bikes away from kids. Nothing happened. No police came. He hided the bikes in garages, in different garages where the police didn't know where they were. And he did all kinds of mean things to people that owed him money that didn't want to pay. He harassed them by telephone and called all hours of the night. Sometimes, all the time, like he locked the telephone in. He called the people and when they answered, they said hello and he didn't hang up and he made all kinds of funny noises. And he did that to neighbours too. All kinds of weird things he did. But I couldn't do nothing about it because he was my husband and I wasn't allowed to say anything. The kids hated Dad too. And he did that to the tenants. He just throw all their things out when sometimes they damaged stuff or they didn't pay the rent. So he went and shut their power off and their gas off and when the police came he said, 'I didn't do it.' I hated all these behavior. He didn't get along with anybody. Not with his kids, not with his wife. He destroyed every friendship that I had. He didn't let us go to church. He told me – that was about when my youngest daughter was about five years old – he says, 'If you go to church one more time I throw you out of the house.' I am supposed to clean his shoes or cut the lawn outside or weed the garden in that time. He said that would be much smarter. He said all people that go to church are crazy and they are supposed to be hanged by their feet upside down. I hated that talk. Oh, I couldn't stand it because I was brought up different.

In spite of the amount of abuse she was withstanding, Heidi continued trying to create a normal family life for her children. However, her husband's behaviour seemed to become even more erratic and his threat's on her life seemed more real when he said he needed a gun to keep everyone in line.

> In 1979 it really got bad. On Christmas my son bought my husband a little brown carpet as a Christmas present, for in front of his bed, because we always exchanged Christmas presents on Christmas Eve. That was our tradition. I bought him always something, the kids bought him always, each of them bought him a present. But he never liked any of them. He used to but that Christmas he didn't like anything. And so when my son gave him that carpet all nicely wrapped up, he opened it and he said, 'You take that back. I don't even want it. I want a gun. You buy me a gun.' And I said, 'What do you need a gun for?' He said, 'I need a gun for a long time already to keep you all in line. And if anybody steps out of line, I'm going to let him have it.' And I said, 'Is that the way a family is supposed to live?' I started crying. That was our Christmas Eve, all spoiled. Anna started crying too. She said that is not her father anymore. It sounds unreal. And Iris and Tom came over; I had invited them for supper. When they came in the house we were supposed to have supper, everything was ready. My husband went into the bathroom, took a bath and never came out. And then he went into the bedroom and locked himself into the bedroom; went to bed. I thought, 'Well this sounds really strange.' On Christmas day, his sister phoned me and she wished us a Happy Christmas and I did too. And she asked me if she and the kids and her

> husband, if they could come and visit us, if we would be at home. I said, 'Sure, we are at home. Come on over.' She said the kids sure would like to visit us. They always ask them that they never go any place, and they had promised them that they will go with them someplace on Christmas holidays. So I says, 'Come on over.' And my husband heard that. I didn't ask him for permission if she was allowed to come. So I had to phone her. He said, 'You phone her right back and you tell them that they are not allowed to come. I don't want no visitors. I don't need no visitors. I don't need no friends, no anybody. If they come, I'll throw you out right with them and you can stay there and you don't get back in this house ever again.' So I had to pick up the phone and call her up and tell her that she is not allowed to come, and the kids and her husband. I said, 'This is ridiculous! What is this going to be? There must be something wrong here!' He had broken off all my friendships before.

The news broadcast on New Year's Day, 1979, stating that the new Alberta Property Act had come into effect (meaning that half of the family property belongs to the wife), triggered off more anger and abuse in Heidi's husband. For Heidi, however, it marked a turning point, providing her with a means by which she could eventually leave her husband and live on her own.

> So on New Years day in 1979 we were watching the Rose Bowl parade – we did that every year. And after the Rose Bowl parade was over the news came on, and Hans and Anna and me were sitting on the kitchen table and having lunch. And my husband was up when he heard them say on the news the new Alberta Property Act law came in effect today. They said that when a couple owns property, half of everything belongs to the wife. Well, then my husband got really upset when he heard that on television, and he said, 'If that is the case that the wife gets half of everything, I'll get rid of you one way or another, even if I have to kill you.' That was exactly his words what he said. I was listening and nobody said a word. The kids were just listening. Oh he started raving and yelling. He said, 'You son-of-a-bitch, you get out of this house and I'll see to it that you leave this house and you don't get nothing.' And I never said anything that I want something or anything about it. We just heard the news. And from that day on it was worse and worse. That was just a year ago.

In the meantime Heidi carried on, managing and maintaining the rental properties and working alongside her husband on construction jobs. Since he had threatened to kill her and dispose of her body in warehouse garbage bins, she was constantly afraid for her life.

> Then, on January 6, we had a repair job to do. It was for a company, they had delivered some material to a place and the driver had backed up to the big garage door and had smashed in part of the wall and so that big garage door was all damaged and the whole overhang there had to be repaired in both sides, the pillars had to be replaced. So my husband ordered me to go to work with him because the kids had gone back to university and so I was his regular bricklayer helper. So we worked there for three days. We always worked until it was way dark. And I was always scared when I had to go to work with him by myself, because a couple of years before he had told the kids that he will kill me one of these days and he will stuff me in a big garbage bin by a warehouse so nobody could find me. And if somebody would ask in the neighbourhood where I was he would tell them I would be on holiday in Germany. And so whenever we came to those warehouses – I had to go to work with him a lot of times – whenever I see those big

> garbage bins, I was really afraid because I remembered every time I seen them what he might do to me if there is nobody around. And especially at nighttime. So when we were working at the oil field supply there were always still people inside working shift work, so I was glad. We had put up this scaffolding, three scaffolding high and we put the planks across to put material on top, just close to the roof like. And there were only three blocks laying on all those planks and he ordered me to come up and help him. It was really cold, snow and wind blowing, and I said, 'I can't climb up there until you take one or two of them planks away. I have nothing to hold on.' And he yelled and he yelled at me that I am supposed to come up right now or else he will come down and get me. I says, 'I can't climb up because I have nothing to hold on up there to climb over.' And he said he will stretch his foot out. And then in that minute it hit through my body like lightning, because just six days before he had told me that he will get rid of me one way or another, even if he has to kill me. And underneath was the cement driveway. So I was supposed to hold onto his foot and he would just give me one kick and I would fly down and I would be dead or crippled for life. I started crying. I didn't get up on the scaffolding. I started crying and I thought, 'If he comes down and beats me up, I'll run inside and there is still people inside. I just hope that the door is still open.' So I had to live or work in fear all the time.
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> Then in April we went to another job and there were again big garbage bins. It was a warehouse. And we worked late too and I was really scared. There were no people in the warehouse at that night time anymore. We worked for a couple of days there. But he didn't get nasty to me at that time. But I was scared all the time. I wouldn't dare raise my voice even towards him, no matter what I had to do. I just obeyed him like a – I don't know what to say. So that was the last job I went with him. But in the meantime I did housecleaning and painting. I did all the bookkeeping for the masonry business since 1957. Sometimes in summer we had three, four, five workers. I made the pay day, I did all the invoices, I filled out all the bids. We had lots of times government contracts. I was working all the time. We worked on that last job in April and I still was house cleaning and painting and doing everything. Sometimes four tenants in one month moved and I had everything everywhere cleaned up. Nobody cleaned house, nobody cleaned the stove or a toilet or a fridge or washed walls. I did that all and lots of other repairs to do.

Heidi describes how her husband kept sticks and tools by the door and under his bed, to be used as weapons if need be. She explains that living with her own fear, she was unaware that her husband was raping their youngest daughter, as he had been doing already for nine years. Threatened by her father, and encouraged by her mother to obey her father, Anna had been afraid to tell anyone what was happening.

> In February 1979, he had a cut off hockey stick laying by the entrance door and every Monday when I washed clothes I wanted to take that stick away. I thought, 'That looks stupid in our house. A lot of people come to our house – we have 11 tenants – they see all that stick laying by the door, and I want to take it away.' And he raised his hand and he said, 'Don't you dare take it away.' And I says, 'Why not?' He said, 'That is there for a reason. That is there for you. When you get out of line, I let you have it until you can't get up anymore.' He never had before tools under his bed. He had a hammer, most of the time, he had an axe, he had a cut-off hockey stick and a cut-off goal stick under his bed. And in his book case he had a screwdriver about a foot long. And he never allowed me to take those tools out into the garage where they belong.' And he says, 'No, they stay there. They are there for a reason.' So I didn't ask anymore for what the reason was; I just couldn't go to sleep. I fell asleep when I thought he was watching television. I could sleep until about two o'clock; I woke up just like an alarm clock all the time. I went to bed about 11 and woke up at two. And sometimes he came to bed

about three o'clock or sometimes he took a bath or roamed around in the house. Sometimes he went outside. And sometimes he didn't come to bed until five o'clock in the morning, but I couldn't sleep. I was scared! As soon as I heard the door open I was afraid what he might do. And I thought he was watching television, but he was raping our daughter. And he held her mouth shut and told her if she makes one sound he throws her naked outside and locks the door and never let her in. So he kept her that way for nine years. And I kept telling her when she started to explain something to him and he didn't like it, I told her, 'Keep quiet, keep quiet! You see Dad doesn't like it. You must not talk back to your father. You must do as he says.' I didn't know what he was doing. And she was afraid to say one word. She didn't tell anybody.

Heidi tells how her husband's success in a court action, taken against him by the Revenue Department, reinforced his belief that he could manipulate others for his own benefit. He threatened to 'get rid of' her and find a young girl to replace her.

Then, in the middle of April, he was on trial by the Revenue Department. He was under investigation already since 1974 but he lied and lied and they dragged it out and they sent him statements already signed September 1978, that he was supposed to back pay $16,000, and he just wouldn't pay it. And they sent him statements with interest added over and over. Then finally he took a lawyer. They kept coming to our house a lot of times, and he was always mad and mean and nobody could say a word anymore. It was just unreal in our house. Everything was my fault. I didn't do nothing to aggravate him or anything; he just didn't know anymore who to blame so it was always my fault. So the lawyer that he took, he wouldn't believe his lies so he quit on him. He had to pay him $655 and he said he is not taking this case to court. He couldn't lie for him. So he says that's even better, he go to court by himself. He can lie much better and the judge will believe him because they think on the witness stand he is telling the truth. So he says he don't need no lawyer. He says, 'As long as *you* don't show your face there. And if you do I'll kill you.' So I didn't say nothing. I was glad not to go there. He always said he will straighten out everything, I am too stupid to handle business anyway. He said I am just a stupid idiot. So I said, 'Well, do it whatever you like. I don't mind. I don't have to straighten that out. You signed the name to the income tax, not me.' I prepared the income tax but I knew it was wrong for many years but he wouldn't listen to anybody. He just had to have his own way. So then the revenue trial came up on April 17, 18 and 19. On the last day was delayed to April 26 so he said so far he did all right, they believe everything he says, and he says today it will be nothing to it. So I thought for sure they would put him in jail. He never paid any income tax for all the tenants, for all the rental income that he had. So on the last day the trial was over. I think about 11 o'clock or so he came home. And he was really happy. He says, 'You see, you stupid idiot, I made it. It was a cinch to lie on the witness stand.' They believed everything he said. He told them that he doesn't own those properties, his mother in Germany owns the properties and he is just the manager of it. So he said they just gave him $6275 fine and that was all there is to it. So he says, 'Now, I just have to get rid of you and then I have made it. I'm going to get myself a young girl and live it up.'

Heidi perceived that a constant preoccupation of her husband was making money and investing it in more properties. When he made plans for purchasing more property and building another house Heidi objected, telling him that she didn't want to work like that anymore and suggesting they could separate.

> And that was two days after then when he really blew his top. On Saturday when I had gone Safeway shopping, then when I came home and I put away the groceries, then he said again, 'How much money do we have?' I said, 'You know very well how much money we have.' He always started arguing about the money. Every day he want to know how much money do we have. So he said he wants to buy another house. I said, 'Don't you have enough houses already? I don't think I want to buy another house with you. I'm working already day and night. I get up every day at six o'clock in the morning when the kids get up for university. I make them breakfast and then I keep on going. I do the housecleaning, I do the bookkeeping, I do the washing and ironing and then when it's about eight o'clock that I know that the people are up in the houses, then I go housecleaning and painting. And then when you get up at noon time, then I have to be ready and go with you and lay blocks and bricks wherever. Or do other repair jobs. And my work day goes on until 11 or 12 o'clock at night. I am physically and mentally exhausted. I can't do it anymore.' I says, 'We have so much that we cannot get along together anymore. We can part and each of us have enough to live on and we don't have to fight every day.' I says, 'I am sick and tired of you, of your whole business. I had it.'

Seemingly in retaliation, Heidi's husband ordered her to pack and get out, before he killed her. She left taking her suitcases to her daughter's place nearby.

> So he went outside and Anna had to dress up – it was Saturday. We had started in early March to put the aluminum siding all around the house on the overhang, on the gable ends, in the front. In the back of our house was bricks already. But the front we put white siding on, metal siding. So we just had on the gable end and under the roof left to do. I had been helping him before every day because the kids were at school. But then they had finished university, and Anna wanted to get some application filled out for a job application – she want to get a job – and so was Hans. They were filling out application forms all over and going for interviews. So he ordered Anna to dress up and go outside with him. About a half an hour later he came in the house and Anna was right behind him. Hans was in the house; we were off in the kitchen. And then he said, 'And you, you be out of this house before nightime. You can take what you can carry.' And nobody is allowed to help me. And if I am not out of the house by six o'clock this evening he is going to kill me. And he said and really this time he means it. So I started crying. I said, 'For 26 and a half years we been married. This is all you have to say to me? This is what I deserve?' And he says, 'You deserve worse than that. You deserve to be kicked out like a dog.' And so I says, 'Well kids, I think that's it.' And he said anybody that helps me packing or carrying gets thrown out just like me. So the kids started crying too. Anna wanted to go with me. I said, 'Where should I go? I have no place to go?' I wanted to give one tenant notice and he says he always wanted me to have only one house – a real dirty, filthy place – Indians lived there since 1972 and nobody has cleaned up or anything. It was just like a pigpen that place. That he wanted to give me. But that even was too good for me that day. He says, 'You don't get nothing.' So I went up in the attic and got a couple of suitcases down and he went outside and I started packing. And he came again and he was watching me if I really start packing. He want to make sure that I am going. And he says after six o'clock I can't take nothing out of this house, what I can get out of the house before six o'clock I can take. But only what I can carry. The rest of it stays all here. So I started packing and I started carrying and I didn't know what to take. So I took some clothes, took some dishes, and I wanted to go to my daughter across the street but they weren't home; they went shopping. I had phoned her but I had her key. It was one of our houses in the basement, that's where she and her husband lived. So I took things over and put it in her hallway. They just had a small suite and they had it all full of furniture and didn't have no room to put my stuff. I couldn't take no bed or nothing.

When Heidi saw that one of her tenants was moving out, she reasoned she could move into one of the suites they owned. Her husband first agreed, then changed his mind. Finally he ordered her to stay in their basement. She describes how she barricaded the door in her basement room, afraid he would come down and kill her in the night.

> And then I seen tenants moving, after I had taken a couple of suitcases over, out of one of our other houses on that day. And they were finished, that lady told me that, and I could come and clean up. So I said to my husband, 'Well, I have to leave this house. Couldn't I go and move over there? It's a three bedroom suite, that I have a bigger place. Iris got her place full, there is no room for my stuff.' First he didn't want to and then he says okay. I says, 'Well that lady gave me $50 on Friday night in damage deposit and she wanted to move in next Tuesday, so I have to go and give her the damage deposit back.' And he says, 'Yeah you could move in there.' And then I says to Anna, 'I am too nervous, too upset to drive. Ask your dad if you could drive me.' It was just across the railroad tracks, not far from here. And he said, 'Okay, but be right back.' She has to come and work with him. So on that place the mother wasn't home; her son opened the door. They had a heck of a mess, that's why I guess they didn't let me in, and the mother had been sweeping in the back but she didn't come to the door. So I explained to the son that my husband throws me out of the house, he is going to kill me if I am not out of the house before six o'clock and I have no place to go and he allows me to move into this house, so your mom should look for a different place. So I gave him the $50 and Anna and me, we went home. Anna put the car into the garage. I walked in the house and my husband was on the telephone and I heard him saying, 'She is on drugs; she is crazy; she don't know what she is doing. You come right back and bring the $50 damage deposit back and you can move in whenever you want. You shouldn't believe whatever she says. She is crazy and I will put her in the mental institution. I already called and they will be coming any minute and pick her up.' I said, 'What do I hear here?' And he said, 'Yeah, you heard right. You are stupid and you are crazy and I will tell everybody so.' That I am on drugs and that I don't know what I am doing. I started crying again. I says, 'Now what? I am not allowed to move in there? I have some suitcases back already and I have still some at Iris's place! What will the neighbours think? I carry suitcases back and forth.' And he says, 'That's right! All the neighbours should know too that you are stupid and you are crazy and you belong to the mental institution. And I will see that you get there very soon.' I says, 'What should I do now? No place to go, Saturday night.' He says, 'You can stay in the basement until the lawyer sorts it out.' And I am not allowed to come upstairs anymore. I wouldn't be allowed to go anyplace except to the lawyer or to Safeway – no, to a doctor or the Safeway. So Anna helped then. It was nightime. Nobody ate supper; nobody was hungry. So she helped me carry stuff downstairs, my clothes and some dishes, and so we were carrying until about two o'clock at nightime, because my husband was laying on the chesterfield watching TV. And I was scared because he told me that I was not allowed to come upstairs anymore. So I thought, I can't take nothing anymore so I have to keep on carrying.' I was so tired and so worn out I could hardly walk. It was terrible! So I stayed downstairs. I couldn't sleep; I couldn't eat. I was awake all night; I was scared that he would come down at nightime and kill me. Because he wanted to get rid of me so bad. I put a whole pile of suitcases in front of the door and he had the outside door all full of junk in front that I couldn't get out. He had the chesterfields in front of the door, he had two big wooden rolls from heavy cables, I don't know where he had gotten them from; I think tenants had left them here. He put them in front of the outside door, now I couldn't get out. And the laundry room door what was the entrance in the house, I put a pile of heavy suitcases in front and then I found a clothesline rope and I tied the laundry room door and the bathroom door together so I thought that he couldn't open the door, because he had the key

> to that door. I left my window always unlocked and I put a chair underneath so I thought, 'If came he comes, I'll jump out the window.' It was so horrible!

For six weeks Heidi lived in the basement, cooking and cleaning for her husband upstairs, cleaning and painting their other houses when he ordered her to, and returning to the basement at night. Though Anna wanted to move to the basement with her mother, she was ordered to remain upstairs where her father had easy access to her. Heidi describes how she couldn't believe what was happening, but felt somewhat safe when her son was home.

> Next morning somebody rang the doorbell upstairs and he had a habit not to go and answer the door, that was my job. He just laid in bed and he didn't care who ring on the phone or the doorbell. He didn't care. So the doorbell ring a couple times, so I went upstairs to see who it was. It was Sunday morning. So it was one tenant. She had just given half the rent and she wanted a receipt for that rent deposit. And so my husband came down the stairs to the door and he didn't say nothing, but he said that I should go and make a receipt out for that lady. Because he couldn't write English and I did all the bookkeeping. So I gave her the receipt and then Anna had woken up and she said, 'Mom, can I have coffee with you downstairs?' And my husband had heard that and he says, 'You make coffee up here. The coffee pot stays up here. You are not allowed to take that downstairs.' So I made coffee upstairs and we sat together at the kitchen table and had breakfast and then I went downstairs again. He told Anna already in the nightime that she is not allowed to go with me downstairs. She want to move with me downstairs and sleep with me downstairs and he said to Anna if she take just as much as one thing downstairs she'll fly out of the house that she never had seen anything like that before. So she was scared stiff. So she said she has to stay upstairs. She cried! Her tears were rolling down! I didn't know what he was doing to her. She had to stay upstairs that he could rape her. And she was not allowed to go with me. But I didn't know. So I had to go – he ordered me right after we had eaten breakfast to take the cleaning pail and paint stuff and go in that house where I wanted to move in the day before, because it was just one filthy place. Was Indians had lived in there and they left it all dirty and I had to go and clean house. So I cleaned house from eight o'clock in the morning till about 9:30 at night. I didn't have nothing to eat or to drink. He didn't care. Then Anna came over and she said, 'Mom, you should come home and eat something.' So I came. He was laying on the chesterfield when I was working. That went on many times. Next day I went again, and again, and again, and then I had to go to work with him on jobs, and on the repair jobs. That went on for six weeks like that. I cooked the meal, I ate supper, I washed the dishes in the evening and then I had to go downstairs to sleep. And Anna, she had to sleep upstairs. And then they found both a job. Hans and Anna, they got a job and Hans had to go up north. I always felt a little bit safe while he was still in the house because his bedroom was downstairs but outside of that suite, and he always told me, 'Mom, if dad come and bothers you just yell real loud and I will come and help you.' So in all this six weeks from April 28 to June 13 he never said once that he is sorry what he did to me, or he never asked me once to come back in my own bed again. I couldn't understand it! So I just kept quiet. I hardly talked; only the kids talked to me. But he talked and I answered just what I had to, but otherwise we didn't talk.

During this time Heidi again saw her lawyer. Once again the lawyer demonstrated her lack of understanding of Heidi's situation when she suggested marriage counselling. However, she was helpful in that she made an appointment for Heidi with a divorce

lawyer.

> I went to see again Mrs. Goldman, the lawyer, and I told her that our marriage completely broke down and she said, 'Have you gone to a marriage counsellor?' I said, 'What's the use? He wouldn't go. He says all the time that I am stupid and I am crazy and I am nothing but a crazy idiot.' He called me, 'You dummy, you stupid nut,' all day long, every day. So Mrs.Goldman had told me that she had written to him registered letters, he doesn't answer. She had given him phone calls, as soon as he hears her name then he hangs up. She says she must tell me that she is just a real estate lawyer. She's an elderly lady. She said she couldn't handle him. She couldn't do nothing with him. She said, 'If you make up your mind up really good what you want, you need a divorce lawyer.' And she recommends me one and she'll make appointment for me. And I says I did make my mind up long time ago. I just had to wait till the kids finish university. Now I have to wait until they have a job because he told the kids if I go – in a way he wanted me to go and in a way he wanted me to stay – if I go he wouldn't give the kids any mail or any messages or any phone calls, and so therefore they had made all their applications, they couldn't get a job. So I had to wait until each of them had a job. So Mrs.Goldman, she made appointment with Mr.Farrow, and she says, 'He is expensive but he is the best.'

Experiencing stomach pain and unable to sleep, Heidi also went to see her doctor who was supportive. He gave her some pills, confronted her with her reasons for staying in her marriage, taped her story and asked her to return to see him.

> Then, when I couldn't stand it anymore I went to see the doctor. I went to see our family doctor and he asked me, 'What's wrong?' I told him, 'I have to live in the basement. My husband threatens to kill me so many times, and he said that really this time he means it. And that I'm not allowed to go anyplace anymore except to the Safeway or to the doctor.' And I said, 'I need something! I can't sleep for days and days; I'm so tired I'm just falling asleep standing up, but I can't sleep because I'm so frightened.' So he gave me some pills, Valium I think, and he says, 'Just take them when you really need them.' So I took some and then I could sleep. And he gave me advice. He says, 'Nobody can tell you what to do, but you should do what is right for you.' He said, 'If you think all your wealth is more important to you than your health, then you shall stay and suffer. But if you think otherwise, you shall get out as quickly as possible.' I said, 'I have no place to go. He doesn't let me move into one of our houses. We have 11 suites rented out and he won't give me even one. He says I don't deserve nothing; I just deserve to be kicked out like a dog, and he won't give me a stick of furniture.' So the doctor told me to come back in a couple of days, he wants to see me and talk to me and he took everything on tape what I said. And so I kind of could sleep a bit, but still my stomach was very upset.

The divorce lawyer was also supportive to Heidi. He advised her to take some money out of the joint bank account and find a place to live, emphasizing that she must think of herself and what is best for her.

> I went to see at the same time Mr.Farrow, and we had an interview for maybe about two hours. I told my husband I had tests in the laboratory so I had to wait around, so he didn't know that I went to a lawyer. So my lawyer told me that he cannot tell me what to do, but I should do what I think is right for me. He says, 'You have a joint account. Take money out, what you think you need. It might take a long time till you get your divorce. It might take a year or so and you should protect yourself. You should take money and put it on your own name so he cannot take it back.' And I said, 'My husband had ordered

> for our son a car; he had promised him for many years, when he is a good boy and finish university then he can pick himself out a car that he likes and he would pay for it. So the car was ordered and he had put $500 down payment on it at Easter time. And he was waiting for it to come.' So the lawyer told me again, 'You should do what you think is right for you.' So he said he cannot give me too much advice ahead of time; I should find a place to live. And I says, 'How can I go and find a place to live?' The lawyer told me, 'Where there is a will, there is a way. You will find a way.' And he cannot help me with that.

Searching for a place to live, Heidi found that landladies could be either unappreciative of her situation or understanding and supportive. She first describes an incident in which a landlady refused to deal with her because she hadn't yet got a paying job and because she was going through a divorce. She then describes a second incident in which another landlady acted with compassion and immediately found her a place to live.

> One time Anna and me, we went when my husband just had gone on a repair job by himself and he was out just for a couple of hours and Anna and me, we went with the car. To one place we came, the lady says, 'Where do you work?' I says, 'I don't have a job.' She says, 'Lady, that's too bad, then I cannot take you. If you do not have a job, you cannot pay.' And I says, 'I could pay. I think maybe I own more than you, but just right now I don't and I just have to fight for it and it might take a year or so, but I am a hard worker and I will go to work as soon as I get a place to stay. I work for my husband right now. I do his bookkeeping and I do all kinds of other jobs.' She says, 'Well, sorry, can't take you, especially when you are in divorce proceedings.' They don't want my husband coming to their windows and have the windows smashed. 'Well,' I says, 'thanks a lot! I hope you are not in my shoes someday.' So we went to another place. Well anyway, we didn't get anything. I said, 'Well, I just have to keep on trying.' So I met a lady on the way home on the bus, an old lady, and she told me about this apartment. She lives herself here and she says they don't take single persons but if your daughter is with you, she is a student, you might be able to get a place. And she said sometimes people have to wait a half a year they have so many applications. 'Oh my God', I thought, 'I can't wait a half a year. I have to have a place as soon as possible. I can't stand it anymore, being scared every night to go to sleep, that he will come down and kill me just because he wants to get rid of me so bad.' So I went straight to the rental office from the bus and the lady in the rental office, I told her my story and she says, 'I will see what I can do. If I can, I will help you.' Oh, that was really nice to hear. And she says, 'Give me your phone number.' I says, 'I can't give you my phone number because if my husband finds out that I am looking for a place he won't even let me get out. He will kill me before I get out. I have to get out without him knowing it.' And so I gave her my daughter's phone number, and Iris phoned me from her office. Within two hours she had this place for me. I was so relieved! I said, 'There must be somebody up in heaven watching out for me and helping me along.' So I went right away to the Safeway for some groceries and I took $100 – she said she needs $100 deposit. So I brought her the deposit and she said in a few days she will give me the keys when I go past the office. So then we had the place. That was on the first of June when I rented it.

Having rented a suite, Heidi and Anna secretly moved their belongings to it in preparation for the day they would actually leave. Heidi explains that Anna had wanted to leave home several months before but that she had convinced her to wait until they could move out together.

> And then every night when Anna came home from work she took things out to the car, breakable things, things that she had packed already. She started packing at Christmas time too. She was determined to leave our house. She said that time, 'Mom, I'm moving out. I don't care anymore about school. I just can't stand it in this house anymore. I can't live here anymore; I want to go.' I says, 'Anna, you just started university; you have to finish the second semester and then you have one year finished. Stay! Hans still has to go this last semester and then when he is finished and Dad is still that mean to us, then we'll move out together. Stay with me because I can't move out by myself. And you can't move out by yourself because you don't have no money to pay for a place, and I would want you to go to university. So when I am on my own then I'll go to work and I'll support you. We'll stay together, we'll live together; I go to work and you go to school.' And this way we got this place because she is still a student. So then Anna worked every night or morning – she worked in the Alberta Hospital during summer holidays. When she went to the morning shift she packed the back of the car all full of stuff and sometimes I helped her. We went at nightime, in the middle of the night. I couldn't sleep anyway and she was awake and we went together and took things out in the car. And then the next day she put it here in this place and then she came home with the empty car. So for two weeks she moved already stuff and then I says, 'When Dad gets really mean again – every couple of days he blew his top for no reason whatsoever – and he wants to throw us out of the house, then we will have a place to go. So far we always just cried and cried and took it and no place to go. But this time when he blows his top, we have a place to go.'

The day of the confrontation arrived. Heidi refused to paint the house one hot day and when her husband became abusive she told him she was leaving. She describes how she managed to delay her actual departure until Anna arrived home from work, and how they managed to take their car with them.

> So was on July 12, my husband went to work by himself, just for about three hours only, and he ordered me to go on the scaffolding. We had it up on another, and paint underneath the roof. And it was very hot that day, so I didn't go. But I had ordered the moving truck for next day and so I want to finish packing while he was gone. And when he came home he says, 'Why didn't you paint? I told you to go out and paint.' And I said, 'It's too hot today. The sun is shining there on the east side of the house, and so I wait until the sun goes down and then I'll go up and paint.' And then he started again, 'How much money you got in the bank?' He wants to buy another house. I says, 'You know very well how much money we got in the bank. Why do you ask me all the time? Just to aggravate me?' And he says, 'What is with you anyway?' I says, 'What is with me anyway? I live for six weeks in the basement like a hostage and I can't take it anymore. I am working day and night and you treat me like a slave and I call it quits! You tell me every day that I am a stupid maid and a stupid idiot. Is that so?' And he says, 'Yeah, that's so. And you deserve to be kicked out like a dog. And you don't get a stick of furniture if you do.' And I says, 'Well, I'm moving! I call it quits! Your stupid maid is quitting!' And he says, 'Okay, if you want it that way, then get out right now.' I says, 'I will'. He didn't know that I had a place to go. That was about two o'clock in the afternoon and he was raving mad and he said when Anna comes home from work he'll take our car keys away, hers and mine, and he'll put the car in the garage and take the wheels off and then we'll see how far we get. And I thought, 'Ah ha!' I knew that Anna was coming here at three o'clock so I look at the clock all the time until it was about 10 minutes to three o'clock. Then I took my purse – I didn't dress up or nothing, just the way I was– I took my purse and went out of the house. He thought I was going to Safeway. So I went here, I met Anna here. She just drove up here and I said, 'Anna, we cannot take the car back. Dad just is really mad at home and he told me that he is going to take both our car keys away and take

the wheels off and that you cannot drive the car to work anymore. He figured then we would be just without legs. So we leave the car here, he doesn't know that we have this place and then we walk home.' And we walked home and he was waiting for us. He says, 'Where is the car?' And I says, 'We left it at a friend's house.' And he said, 'I didn't ask you, I asked Anna.' And Anna says, 'Well like Mom said, we left it at a friend's house.' And he says, 'You go and get this car right now, otherwise I wring your neck. And hers too.' And Anna stood in front of him and she says, 'You mean Dad, you would kill me if I don't bring the car back?' And he says, 'Darn right! And I mean it! If you don't go right now, I will wring your neck.' And she said, 'I was at Leduc today with some patients. I had to go to the dentist and missed my lunch hour and so I'm real hungry.' And I started supper at home. She said she want to have supper first and then she'll go and get the car. And my husband said again, real mean, 'You go and you go right now and get the car back, otherwise I will wring your necks. Have you forgotten that you are just a fly against a bulldozer? And from now on I will show you really who is the boss in the house.' He says we'll see from now on the other side of him, that we had never seen before. So I said, 'Anna, let's go!' I shut all the elements off on the stove, each of us took just a sweater and a purse and we left. But he didn't know that we have a place to go. So we came here and I said to Anna, 'I rather sleep on the bare floor than one more night in that house with him, scared to death. So we go now, we take the car and go to the Londonderry police station and ask them for help. What to do? If he could do something to us if we don't bring the car back.' And they said, 'No. The car is registered in my husband's name, but as long as he doesn't know where it is and it is still insured, he can't do nothing.' And we have the moving truck ordered for next morning and so I asked for police protection to get a little bit of furniture and my clothes out. We didn't get nothing from the upstairs, from our home. We just got this old junk that was in the basement. The kids had that in the living room downstairs, they had made themselves a TV room down there. So we just took this and the police came next morning, the moving truck came and so we moved our stuff here. And from then on, Anna went to work every day with the car.

Heidi got a job immediately, in the kitchen of a large department store. It was a part-time job offering no benefits and no holidays, but she was glad to have it.

I went looking for a job right away next day and I went to the beauty parlor, got my hair done, dressed up nice and went to Woodwards and made application. They asked me what I wanted to do. I says, 'I have no idea. I'll take any job that is available.' And they asked me what I had done so far. I says, 'I worked for my husband. We have a masonry business and we had a rental business and I did the bookkeeping and I did cleaning and painting. And in the earlier years, I did sewing and I worked in a coffee shop. I washed dishes because I couldn't speak English. And I did house work in 1964-1965. I took Anna with me and I had every day a different place to go because my husband was bugging me in winter. He never had a job and so he was always aggravating me until I couldn't stand it, and to keep my sanity I figured I had to go out and work. So I did that for a couple of winters. But in springtime he always said, 'If you go to work one more day I throw you out of the house.' Then I had to quit. I had to stay home. So they gave me a job within two days they said, if I would like to work in the kitchen. I said, 'That would be perfect. I didn't work as an employee for quite a while but if they show me what to do, I'll do it.' They said they had no full-time job so I says, 'I'll take part-time work, that's okay. As long as I have some job to do. I have to support myself, I have to pay the rent and all the utilities, and I have to pay my groceries and health care.' Because when you are a part-time employee they don't pay your health care, you have to pay it yourself. And she said, 'You don't get no holidays.' I said, 'So what? I don't take holidays then. I am just happy to get a job.' So that was in the middle of June when I started. I moved out June 12, 1979 and a couple of days later I started work.

Heidi's problems were not solved, however, just because she was living away from her erratic and threatening husband. She describes an incident that took place the first day after she and Anna had left, in which her husband confronted Anna at the place where she worked and tried to intimidate her into giving him the car. Afraid of being followed home, Anna drove for several hours through rush hour traffic and finally lost her father.

> On July 13 Anna didn't come home about two o'clock and that day she didn't come home. I was worried. It was already four o'clock when she came. I said to Anna, 'What happened? Where have you been?' And she started crying. She says, 'You know Mom, what happened? Dad waited for me out at the Alberta Hospital in the parking lot.' She said when she opened the door to go to her car, then the doors were all open and she says, 'Mom, I always make sure that the doors are closed before I leave.' And then she said when she walked closer then she seen Dad standing right beside the car. He ordered her to get in the car and drive it home to his garage. And he was going to take the key away and take the wheels away he told her. And she was told to stay in line. So she said, 'Okay,' but she was scared, she said. He didn't know at that time where we were living and she didn't want to give our place away. And she didn't want to give the car up because she needed it. So she said she was driving and driving and thinking what she should do and he was right behind her. So she said she was lucky that she had a full tank of gas. So she drove downtown; it was rush hour in the afternoon. Two years before that we had taken driving lessons with the AMA, Anna and me together. And she said she remembered the driving teacher took us out to Kingsway Avenue, toward the airport and that is real busy and that is three lanes I believe, or four lanes and one way, and so she said she drove out there in that heavy traffic and she figured she could manuever her little car better than her dad could with the big station wagon. So she said she was driving and driving and all the time watching in the mirror at the same time, if he is still behind her. She said she drove around those warehouses criss-cross, and residential districts; she didn't know anymore where she was. She said she was so shaking. Then she ended up at the museum she said. And then she noticed that Dad wasn't behind her anymore. She had lost him. She said she was so shaken up, she went inside and sat down for a half an hour till she felt better. And then she wasn't sure if he was waiting around on the main roads for her someplace. When she came home and she told me all this, I started crying. I said, 'And this is your father! You could have been killed and he don't care. Well, you can't take the car anymore. You have to go somehow with the buses.'

Afraid of being harassed again by her father, Anna took buses to work. She was afraid to be home alone too, and Heidi didn't understand why until later.

> And then she found out that if she goes to the LRT station at Belvedere, there is a bus that goes to that hospital to the shifts. She had to pay each trip one dollar. It cost her two dollars each day on top of the ETS fare. And I said, 'We have to do it because you cannot take the car anymore.' Because he had told Hans or Iris, one of the kids, that that wouldn't happen a second time; he would make darn sure that she wouldn't get away anymore on him. So she was scared all the time, going to the bus stop even. She was scared to go on the bus or coming out. When she came home at nightime I waited on the window here to see when the bus was coming. I knew what time the bus was coming but I was a bit late so I was waiting here on the corner for her to get off the bus and I walked with her. Every day at 11:30 at night I waited up for her. And then when she could sleep in in the morning and I had to go to work, I was worried. When I left her at home alone she was always crying. Her nerves were so bad and I didn't know why. But now I know why.

> Because he had raped her and she was scared that he will do it to her again if he knew that she was all alone here. Yeah! Oh, what a horrible thing!

Eventually Heidi's husband succeeded in finding out where they lived. Although they managed to hide the car, they felt constantly fearful. Anna would have liked to move away but Heidi's small wage and the impossibility of her getting a full-time position made moving impractical.

> Then we were scared that he would find out where we live. I got a big plastic cover to cover the car because we still had insurance on it, and sometimes we went shopping or we wanted to go on a Sunday some place, we want to take the car. So I had it here but I knew somehow he would find out pretty soon where we live because he was determined to get that car away from us. So our son was coming home from up north; he had to write another university exam and he had made arrangement, I think on August fifth that he could write the exam. So he came down and then my husband followed him for three days until he succeeded. He found out where we lived. Then he was driving all the time around. That was Monday when he found out where we live and that Sunday before I was determined that this car is in danger - that he will take that car. So I found in the newspaper an ad with a storage garage. So my son helped me to get the car out and we put the car in storage - paid $30 for a garage so that the car was gone from here, from this parking lot. Then Monday he found out where we live and lucky the car was gone. So he came driving around, day after day, sometimes every half an hour all day long, to see if somebody brings this car back. He wanted to take it because he had a set of keys that fit. So wherever we went - we got that car sometimes out from that storage place and we drove - wherever we went we were not safe. In any parking lot we could have come out and the car was gone and we wouldn't have known where it was. Oh, Anna, when she was on evening shift and she was home during the day, when I came home from work from Woodwards she was always crying. She says, 'Mom, I can't stand it here anymore. I have to move out. We should move out. We should move away from here because it's too close for Dad. He is harassing us all the time, coming to see if he can see the car.' She was scared anytime he is looking for the car, he also will kick the door in. So then I says, 'Well, we can't afford now to move. This place is only $148 and you will go back to school in fall and I have to support you and I only make $85 in Woodwards. So what can you pay from $85? I asked the supervisor if I can have a full-time job and they say no. I was hired for part-time staff and I have to stay that way. There is only two ladies in the whole kitchen, maybe a staff of 25 people - only two of them have full-time job and they work there maybe for 20 and more years. So until somebody retires or dies, then I could get a full-time job.' So my son helped me out. And my daughter, she earned money during this summer, she paid then her own tuition fee for the university again and so we managed to crawl along from month to month.

Heidi's husband found out their phone number and began harassing them on the phone. Finally Heidi attempted to make a deal with him - she would do his bookkeeping if he would sign over the car. Anna didn't trust her father but Heidi insisted they should take the risk. Needless to say Anna was right - her father had no intention of signing over the car to them.

> And then my husband found out the phone number. Our son's car had arrived on a Saturday and I had put my phone number on that deposit slip when my son told me, 'Mom, could you take care of it when the car comes?' That he is up north, that I'll have it delivered here and put it in the garage or have somebody else take it to the garage. Maybe my other daughter. Because then he would have to wait until he comes down to buy license plates and insurance. So I said, 'Yeah, I'll take care of it.' But the car place phoned when I was at work and my oldest daughter was just here visiting. So the car dealer phoned that the car came and she didn't know how to get the car home so she phoned her dad. And the car dealer gave my husband the delivery slip, so my phone number was on there. So as soon as my daughter had come home, Dad drove the car and she drove his car and he phoned here. And he said, 'My name is Frank Moore.' What did he want? He just wanted to check if somebody was home, something like that. My daughter says, 'That's you Dad, quit kidding around, that's you! I just talked to you five minutes ago and that's your voice.' Then he hang up. So from then on he kept bugging us – phoning at 6:30 in the morning till one o'clock at night. All the time harrassing us! That if we don't come back right now and do his bookkeeping, he'll take the car away. And all the time like that. So then Anna and me, we went – Anna didn't want to go but I says, "I told him on the phone, 'If we come and do your bookkeeping, will you leave us alone then with the car? You just have to sign your license number and your name and then the car would be ours and you could quit harrassing us. And we'll come once a month and do your bookkeeping.'" And Anna said, 'Mom, I don't think so. He is just fooling.' And I says, 'Well, maybe he will give us the car. He said yes on the phone.' So Anna went to the AMA and got the papers filled out and she says, 'Mom, we shouldn't go.' 'Well', I says, 'let's try it anyway.' But I didn't know the real thing behind it. So when we came to the door I rang the doorbell and he said, 'Oh, it's you. I just wanted Anna.' And I was stunned. I said, 'Well, the bookkeeping. She doesn't even know how to write a receipt out. If she did then I told her what to write on.' That sounded funny to me. So now I know why he wanted just her. To rape her some more. He didn't really want me. He never wanted me. So I listened and I asked him, 'Well, you have the receipts and invoices to write out, we'll do it and then you sign your name to this paper and then the car is ours.' So he didn't say nothing and he brought the receipt book and I started writing – invoices what he had some job done and bill to pay, and then I says, 'Well, we are finish here. You haven't signed it yet.' He says, 'Are you crazy? Are you stupid? I don't sign nothing.' I said, 'Anna was right! We shouldn't have come here! It's a waste of time. You are the same idiot like you always were. You haven't changed and you never will. Anna let's go.' We took our purse and left.

Heidi and Anna were continually harassed by Deiter. Eventually he located the car and had it towed away. Heidi fought back with court orders, restraining orders and the sheriff on her side.

> So then he kept calling again on the phone, all the time. I had to have my phone number changed. It cost me again $22. And then he wanted the car. He says if we don't bring the car back right now that he is going to report us to the police. He will report that we stole the car and we would get up to four years in jail he told us. And he kept saying that over and over and over. So we didn't bring the car here anymore. We kept it in the storage place. But then Anna said, 'Well Mom, what is the car good to us if we can't drive it?' In the meantime Iris had bought her house in Steele Heights and she had a double garage and all empty. She says, 'Mom, put your car in my garage. It is safe. Dad doesn't know where I live.' But he found out that she still has the same phone number, even if she lives in a different place. He must have dialed her number and Iris answered. So he phoned to her and threatened her if she doesn't tell us that we should bring the car back, he will report us to the police. So the AMA – we had an AMA insurance but on my husband's name – they phoned me and they told me that he wants to have that car

reported stolen, but they don't want to take his report. Because I had told them that we are separated and the police told me as long as he doesn't know where the car is, it will be all right. He can't do nothing. But he didn't let go. But I had made the mistake to take the car out of the storage place and put it in Iris's garage. So he knew. My husband's sister and her husband and the kids, they came to visit me, and my brother-in-law went straight over to my husband and told him where the car is. So he knew that Iris and Tom were working downtown, nobody was home, the house is all empty, the garage is all free to go in. So he took the crowbar and wrecked their big garage door, opened the garage door, ordered the tow truck and had the car towed away. And just a week before somebody told me that I should change the ignition key and the door locks. So I did that. I paid $115 and it didn't help. When Iris phoned me and she says, "Mom, the tow truck driver from Cliff's towing was at her door and he said that he wants to tow the car away - he is supposed to bring it to her dad's place, to the garage. So she says, 'No, that's my Mom's car. You can't take that. You just get lost from here.' But he had the car already out on the driveway, hooked up to the tow truck." So she phoned me and we went right away out and my husband was standing with his station wagon right in front of the tow truck. And I had the restraining order already again, because when he came around harrassing us all the time with the car, then I got a restraining order. Because he had told me that he is going to kick my door in and he is going to take anything he likes out of here. So I was scared to death, and I got a restraining order. And I said, 'You're not supposed to be here. You leave my car here. This is my car and it's going to stay my car. You have three cars at home. What do you need a fourth one for? He says for his girls. He has to keep them happy - all the girls that he advertises for in the newspaper - and he has to bribe them. Any girls that stays with him gets the car. I says, 'Any whore that stays with you for 15 minutes, you're going to give her my car? Send them to work like I do and then when they have worked for you for 25 years like I did, then you can give them a car.' So he says, 'You can't do nothing. That's just the beginning. Tomorrow I will come and kick your door in and having a moving truck in front of your house. When you come home from work, there'll be nothing left.' Oh brother! The tow truck took the car away. I called the police and they said, 'Well, you can't do nothing. The car is on his name. Therefore, he has the right to take it.' The policeman said, 'All you have to go is to the court and get the court order and we go with you and get it back.' I says, 'Oh yeah? So next morning I went to work. The kids told me to stay home because everybody was scared that he will come and kick the door open and take everything out of here and I wouldn't have nothing. And Anna was sleeping - she had afternoon shift that day. So I was scared for her because she was all alone in the house. So I went crying all the way, with the train. I went to the police station on my way to work and I asked them what to do. I said if they could drive a couple of times during the day past my place and call Anna on the phone and see if she is all right. It was unreal! What we all had to go through already. So the car was gone. It took me now a half a year to get that car back. He had two restraining orders, two court orders to give me the car back, and he didn't obey one, until the sheriff went and got it out of the garage.

Eventually there was a hearing. Heidi describes how her husband lied in court about everything - being married, taking the car, etc., and accused her of stealing $200,000 from him.

Then the hearing came up about a month later but he didn't have a lawyer; only I came with my lawyer. And it was in the main courthouse downtown and there was a court reporter there, she took everything on tape. So I was not allowed to say anything because he didn't have a lawyer. So my lawyer just questioned him for three hours, only with a 10 minute coffee break. He lied and lied and lied. Everytime he opened his mouth he put another lie out. So he lied - he said he was never married to me and that he doesn't know

where the car is. And the car was in his garage. I had the keys to all the garages and I went one Saturday night and I found the car but the wheels had been taken off. He had hidden the wheels in a different garage. And on the hearing he said he doesn't know where the car is. My lawyer says, 'Well, didn't you report it stolen? If you don't know where the car is, somebody must have taken it then.' And he says, 'Yeah, somebody took it,' but he doesn't know where it is. My lawyer says, 'You mean you own a $5000 car and you don't care what happened to it?' He says, 'Yeah, it was sitting in front of my house.' And my lawyer says, 'The tow truck towed it to your garage, right?' And he says, 'No, just in front of his house.' And then he said, 'How long was it sitting in front of your house?' He said, 'A few days.' And then he said, 'Well, and then what happened?' 'Well', he says, 'and then he doesn't know anymore what happened to it.' So he was lying. But I couldn't say nothing. I knew where the car was and the lawyer knew where the car was because I told him. Then he lied and he said I had stolen $200,000 from him. And my lawyer said, 'Well, do you have any proof?' And he says, 'No', but he insisted that I have money all over in Edmonton, in every bank, and that I stole all this money from him, that's how come I can go on my own and don't want to live with him anymore. That I have this idea that I don't want to stay with him anymore. Oh he had so many lies. I just thought, 'He is just like in a fairy tale; he is telling all those stories.' But the lawyer lets him lie. He says it doesn't matter really in a hearing. I didn't know that but the lawyer told me afterwards. He said it doesn't really matter, it doesn't mean much.

Deiter kept his threat about finding young girls to live with him. Heidi describes one incident involving one of the teenage girls he kept.

Like he kept some girls just like hostage, and one girl I remember – Iris was still living in the suite across the street and it was just the night before she moved into her house and she asked me if I could come over and help her pack. So Anna and me, we went over to help her pack and then she wanted to ask her father if she could borrow a buggy to move the freezer and the fridge and stove. It's just too hard to lift up. So I said, 'Sure, go over to Dad and ask him for it. It's sitting there in the garage.' So she went over and there was a girl answering the door. And Iris said to her, 'Well, who are you?' And that girl said, 'My name is Mary; I live here.' And she said that Deiter had picked her up just a couple of days ago and that she lives in our house with Deiter. She was just 17 years old. So Deiter wasn't home; he had gone to Safeways shopping. So Iris came over and she told me and I said, 'Go back to that girl and tell her you forgot some stuff in our house, some books you want to look for them. Go in Anna's bedroom and see what you can find.' So that girl had her bed and some clothes and suitcases in Anna's bedroom, all moved in. And so that girl had gone out bike riding and the house was all left alone. So Iris looked up in that bedroom and she found in that girl's books, her name and home address and phone number. So Iris wrote it down quickly and then she brought it to me. And so in a couple of hours later, her father showed up. He had been around our house, ringing the doorbell, knocking on the windows, knocking on the doors, and Deiter and that girl had been in the house and they wouldn't open the door. And the father found out where his daughter is and he wanted to have her come home. And so the neighbours had all seen him and that nobody opened the door and they even had the lights shut off, but they were in the house because the aluminum doors were locked and they have no keys – you couldn't get in if you are outside. So they were in the house. Then the neighbours came over to Iris's place and they told me about it. So the father came over too and talked to me and he says, 'What kind of guy is that husband of yours anyway? He takes my daughter in and don't let her out. I'm not leaving here until I have her out. I want her to come home.' And so he want to know if he could use the phone and call the police and I said, 'Sure, go ahead.' So he phoned the police and they couldn't do nothing either. He wouldn't let her out. And then they called the morale squad and the detectives. So it took them until three o'clock Saturday morning until finally a detective lady got into that house and

> got that girl out. I said, 'He is probably in bed with her and he don't care who is knocking and calling outside. He is sick! He is really sick!' So anyway, what went on after? That was in August, 1979 when Iris moved, when that girl was in that house.

In spite of the problems he caused her, when Deiter needed help (having been beaten to unconsciousness by his angry tenants), Heidi decided to try to help him. However, when it became clear that Deiter was lying again she decided he had deserved the beating he got. Deiter cried and asked Heidi to come back to him but she firmly refused.

> Oh, Deiter told me in September of 79, tenants beat him up and he was unconscious and bleeding all over, and he had called the ambulance and the police and it was on Sunday afternoon and they didn't come right away. And he is used to when he snaps his fingers, everybody has to just jump. So he called Iris and Iris called me. She was supposed to come and take him to hospital or help him and Iris called me and she said, 'Mom, I'm scared. Dad was crying'. He told her six guys beat him up with baseball bats and that he thinks he is blind and that he has to go to hospital and that the police and the ambulance don't come. So I says, 'I don't know what to do. I have a restraining order; I'm not supposed to go there.' But I thought, 'Well, I always feel sorry.' You know? I am soft hearted. So I thought, 'Well, I can't let him lay there. He told Iris he is maybe dying. I have to get him to a hospital if nobody looks after him.' But I was scared to go by myself. So I said to Iris, 'Take a taxi, come to my place and we go together. I phone some neighbours, maybe they go with us.' So it was raining outside, so they were home. So they went with us over to the house and he was falling unconscious on the doorstep. So Mr.Smith put him on the chesterfield and then he was laying there and half crying and shaking, the shock, and he didn't open his eyes. And he said six guys beat him up with baseball bats but he never said what for. And so he said he called the police but they don't come. But they came then when we were there. So they questioned him and he said again, six guys beat him up with baseball bats in the garage and he was unconscious. And then they ask him who was the six guys, if he recognizes one or remembers any of them. So he said we had tenants in the house where I wanted to move in, in that suite. He let them tenants move in and those were the ones that beat him up. I said, 'Good for him! He deserves it. He deserved a much heavier beating. He had that coming for a long time. They didn't give him enough.' But it was only husband and wife that beat him up and not six guys with baseball bats. He had lied again. And the police wouldn't believe him. They said, 'If six guys had beat you up, you wouldn't be alive.' So Mr.Smith took him to the hospital and they took x-rays and we stayed there until eight o'clock in the evening until he was admitted into a bed. And then he started crying and whining and he said that I should come back to him, that he isn't safe anymore. He can't even go outside; hoodlums are beating him up. And he told me drug dealers come to his house and prostitutes and homosexuals. And I says, 'Well, you are advertising day after day.' After he says, yeah, he had sometimes eight ads running in one week. I says, No wonder all kinds of garbage comes to your house. Quit advertising and then they don't come to your house. I don't have those problems.' So he asked me again that he said he never begged anybody in his life but he is begging now that I should come back to him. I said, 'It's too late now. You treated me for 25 years so bad that I couldn't stand it anymore. And you want to kick me out of this house for 15 years. I am sick and tired of hearing that and I got it made now. I am out of this house and you can never throw me out again. I got a job now and I will make it. And I am going to fight you and I am going to get my part, what I deserve, what I worked for. There is enough for you that you can live decently too. I am not coming back.'

Christmas time, the time for family and being together, affected Heidi the way it affects so many people living alone. Deiter told Hans he wanted Heidi to come back, even though he still had young girls in the house. Heidi was lonely and, encouraged by some friends who couldn't believe Deiter could be so mean, arranged with Hans to take supper to him on Christmas day. After supper Deiter began to argue, however, and Heidi left.

> So time went by. It was then Christmas 1979, last year at Christmas. I felt so lonesome! I felt so horrible! Friends came. And he kept telling our son every week a couple of times, that I should come back to him, that I should smarten up and come back. And that he would give it another try and I should give it another try, and he doesn't like to live alone. And he had so many girls living with him but they only stay just a couple of days and they take off again. And he had so much trouble already with the police.
>
> But then at Christmas time I felt so lonely and I felt so awful and he kept telling our son all the time that I should come back to him. But still he had even girls living in the house with him while he was asking for it. I couldn't believe it. But I thought, 'Maybe I didn't try hard enough. I give it another try.' So I went on Christmas day. I phoned him up. My restraining order was over on the day of the hearing so I didn't have no restraining order anymore. And the friends had come to visit me after church and they said too, George and Wilma, they said, 'It couldn't be that Deiter is so mean all the time that your marriage goes apart. Maybe you should give it another try.' So I phoned him up and he was happy that I phoned and he said he would be real happy if we come and have supper with him on Christmas day. So my son and me – I had supper made: I had turkey and cranberry sauce and mashed potatoes and vegetables, and I took it already made – and me and my son went over. So we ate supper. He was dressed up nice and we ate supper together and as soon as we had supper finish he started arguing again. He started arguing that I should come back right now and it was so stupid of me that I moved out in the first place, and that Anna has to come back with me and that everything should be the way it is before. And Anna had just moved out of my place on December first and she was afraid of her father and everytime she goes to the bus stop she is afraid that he will attack her – that he'll stand in some corner and when she gets off of the bus (she had three times a week lab classes in the university) and it was already 11:30, 12 o'clock at night. So Anna moved out but I didn't know the real reason why. But she knew; she is going to tell me pretty soon and if he finds out that I know what he did to her, then he promised her that he will kill her. So I went home on that evening, when he argued for about three, four hours. I said to Hans, 'Let's go. He won't change. He is still the same. He don't want me back. He just wants the workhorse back. But he don't really want his wife back. He don't love me. I hear that from every sentence that he makes. Let's go home.' And Hans went back home to sleep after. He said, 'I just want to make sure that we've got it on the right side.'

Again Deiter convinced Heidi, through Hans, to come over to talk to him. Again she prepared his meal and went over. She then discovered he also needed her to clean three empty suites. Hoping that Deiter had finally learned to appreciate her, she agreed to clean the suites. She first made some demands, however: that they must have a social life, that she wanted a new wedding ring and that her name be put on the land title of their house. Deiter agreed.

So the next day my husband told my son again that I should come back and we might talk it out. So I went to work and after work I went over to his place again, made supper. But I found out that he had three suites empty and they were all filthy and dirty and he needed me for cleaning them. I thought, 'Well, maybe he will smarten up by now. He lived a half a year by himself and he said he didn't like it; maybe he really means that he would change.' So I went right away, started cleaning and painting; every night I worked till midnight and in the morning I went to Woodwards again to work. And so we worked. We worked on New Year's Eve; we worked till six o'clock. He said first that he would like to take me to a dance because I told him, 'I don't want to live the way I lived, I don't want to live the rest of my life anymore like that.' We had no social life whatsoever. And he told me that he will never take me on a holiday again. And on our 25th wedding anniversary – I never forget that either – the oldest daughter, she asked my husband what would he give me for a silver anniversary present. She said, 'Mom's ring is so thin already, it will break pretty soon. You should buy her a new ring.' And he says he is still sorry that he bought me the first one. He says when this ring breaks he says good, then our marriage would be broken too. That was my 25th wedding anniversary present. So I told my husband on the days after Christmas, I says, 'I would want a new ring, and first of all I would want my name on the land title. I know that half of that land, that house is mine, but just to show you that you can never tell me that again, that I have to leave this house, that you throw me out again, that before I come back I want to have that changed.' And at first he didn't want to and then he thought it over and then he says, 'Yeah,' he thinks he's going to grant me all the things that I request. And he would be happy if I come back to him because he had cleaned for a half a year a little bit, not the way I did it, just a little bit. So he had seen what a chore it was. He had no idea before what it is like. And so it was New Year's Day; we didn't go no place that New Year's Eve, we were too tired. 'Well,' I says, 'we can go out after for supper and dance. I love dancing and you haven't been to a dance with me for ages. Or in a restaurant to have supper. We could afford it.' We could live so comfortably and he is so stingy all the time. A chocolate bar is too much for me. So I says, 'That life style has to change, and otherwise I don't come back.' So on New Year's Eve we just sat around and watched TV the rest of the evening. We were working until about six o'clock. And then New Year's Day we were still happy and I thought, 'Well, we'll start the new year right.' So he said we should phone his mother in Germany and let her know that everything is back to normal again, that we are back together again, that I have come back and that I will stay with him. And we phoned also my sister in Germany and then we phoned to Hamilton his sister. And everybody was happy. We phoned to Los Angeles, our friends, and they were all happy for us and they said they wished the new year starts out good and stays that way.

Once Heidi had cleaned the apartments, Deiter changed his mind – he was not going to behave differently. Heidi explains that her boss and landlady had warned her not to move back, but she had been prepared to believe Deiter might have changed.

But next day, I came home from Woodwards and then he said he thought it over, why should he change? He said he has it fine just the way it is. If I want to come back to him and live the way I lived before I would be welcome in his house. I says, 'I thought so! The houses are clean.' I painted in that one house, Sunday night before New Year's Eve; I painted until two o'clock in the morning. I says, 'I thought so. The workhorse only was supposed to come back. Well, the workhorse has changed its mind.' And he still was insisting that I cancel my apartment, that I quit my job right now, that I cancel all my utilities, and I did! Before New Year's I told my supervisor that I think I am going back to my husband and he wants me to quit because we have so much work to do at home, and he doesn't want me to go to work. And I cancelled my apartment. I went to the landlady and I said I'm moving back home. And she says, 'Really, I think you are making a mistake.' And the supervisor at

> Woodwards, she told me the same thing. She says, 'If he did that to you for 25 years, he won't change. He'll just fool you and you will be sorry.' And I cancelled all my utilities. I told them to shut it off. They had the cable TV shut off and everything. And that was the day after New Year's and I phoned Anna. I said, 'Anna, you can come to my apartment and I am moving back home and you can take anything you like for your apartment. So she had taken all kinds of things already, dressers and furniture. I had a different couch here and chairs and stuff. So we had it in the basement.

It was at this point that Anna decided it was time to tell her mother that her father had raped her. Heidi describes how Anna told her and the horror she felt.

> Then she phoned me that evening and she said, 'Mom, I want to meet you in your apartment before you go over to Dad's place. I have to talk to you.' And so she came. That was Friday, January fourth. She came and she started crying, and she started crying so bitterly; she couldn't get a word out of her. And I took her in my arms and I said, 'Anna, whatever is on your heart tell me. I'm your Mom. I'll love you, I told you that a thousand times and I mean it. I will stand by you whatever it is. Tell me!' So she started talking. She says, 'You know Mom, Dad raped me since I am 10 years old, until the day we moved out.' Well I thought I faint! I couldn't believe it! And she say all the incidents. She says, 'Remember when I was 10 years old.' She said she complained her whole bottom hurted all the time. She asked me what she could do. She said she hardly could walk and it hurted so much every step she make. She asked me what I could do for her. I thought, 'Well, it's growing pains.' I thought, 'Well you can't put no cream on here, take a hot bath every night before you go to bed and take an aspirin.' But she cried and she said it hurt so much. And I gave her notes for maybe a whole week – everyday I had to write her a new note that she shouldn't participate in gym, she isn't feeling good; she hurt herself but I don't know where, and until she feels better she shouldn't participate in gym. And she loved gym. I thought she maybe had fallen someplace and she didn't want to tell me. Now if I had known what is going on, I could have taken her to a doctor. But would I ever have thought that a husband, a father, does something like that? Oh! I couldn't grab it!

The next morning Heidi went to work but was so upset she couldn't stop crying. Her supervisor heard the story and encouraged her to go to the police. Heidi saw her lawyer instead, and was told that the incest would be hard to prove since she had never caught Deiter raping her daughter.

> I was so upset next morning! I had to go to work; it was Saturday morning. I was just like half dizzy! When I came to work I cried all the way; I cried all night. My eyes were so swollen up I hardly could look out. The girls in the kitchen, they asked me what's the matter with me. I just could cry. I couldn't get a word out of me. One of the girls, she brought me a cup of coffee and she said, 'You sit down and rest for awhile and if you don't feel better then you should go home.' But then the supervisor came and they told her, so she took me in the office and asked me – she was about my age and she has children – she asked me, 'What's the matter?' So I told her. So she said, 'You go to the police and you report it. There should be something done about this man. He is a liar, a thief and a rapist!' But I went right away to the lawyer, on Monday, and he said it's very hard to prove because I never caught him. He always did it – he figured it out exactly when I would never catch him. He raped her on the job when he took her to work. When we painted and cleaned at the houses he sent me home to make supper and in the meantime she had to come and help him. Not help him – he raped her in that time she told me. And at home, I thought he was watching TV – he was in her bedroom and raped her. Then sometimes he pretended to be outside –

> he opened the outside door and closed it and went into her bedroom. And everytime she had her bedroom door locked, he raised hell the next day. I couldn't understand it! He was so mean and he want to throw her out and he was going to hit her and everything, and he told her if she locks the door one more time he throw her out for good. And so she was scared all the time. And if she was asleep and I thought, 'Well, her bedroom door is locked, she is asleep.' I couldn't find my husband sometimes; in the whole house I couldn't find him. But then I thought, 'Well, the lights are all out, the television is out, he is not upstairs, he is not downstairs.' But I didn't look in Anna's room because her door was locked and I thought, 'Well, tonight she managed to lock the door; I hope he doesn't raise hell again the next day.' But then I thought I must have slept so hard that I didn't hear him go outside. But he didn't go outside! Boy! I can't believe all this happening!

Heidi explains how she and Anna spoke to a detective and how Anna's story was totally believed. Deiter denied the incest. Because Deiter had passed a lie detector test and to save Anna from being cross-examined, the lawyer decided not to use the incest as grounds for divorce.

> And then I went to a detective, told him about it and then he said he has to have an interview with my daughter. So she was writing university midterms and she said, 'Mom, I can't go right now. I couldn't study. I want to wait until the exams are finished. So then she went I think four or five times, she went to see him and she told him everything. And I talked to the detective again and he says he believes her 100 percent. He knows that he did it but he lies. They gave him a lie detector test, they took him downtown and he passed with flying colors. He lies them straight in the face without a wink on his eye. And he says he never heard of it, he didn't do it, he never did, we're making that all up, because we want to make him look bad. And my lawyer says, 'Well, we just don't bring it up under the divorce trial. We don't need it. You have so many grounds for divorce that we don't need that anymore.' But I said, 'If I need it I am ready for it.' So then because my husband is such a mean person and my lawyer knew that he didn't have a lawyer, and so he said the judge might grant him the opportunity to question any witness that was on the witness stand. And if Anna would go on the witness stand, he would tear her to pieces. She would get a nervous breakdown. So therefore we had decided that she don't have to go on the witness stand. But she came to court with me all two and a half days. She phoned me up on Sunday night and she says, 'Mom, would you want me to come with you to court?' I says, 'I sure would.' So she says, 'Okay,' she'll be there. So she gave me a big support. She said, 'Mom, it's time to stand up for yourself and fight him. Don't let go and don't give in and don't get caught. It's time that this has to have an end.' So we couldn't do nothing about the incest case.

Finally, Heidi describes the court hearing which she underwent just a month prior to the interview. It was extremely stressful for her but her lawyer was confident she would get half of the property in the settlement. Unfortunately for Heidi, however, Deiter has continued to harass her and is ignoring the permanent restraining order granted by the judge.

> Well, I am glad that the lawyer got finally the court dates set in May for in November. So he says I had to come in two days before the trial came up and he gave me kind of advice and told me what is going to be up. Oh, it was real rough! I had put lots of things out of my mind already, but I had written a diary and my lawyer had that and so he prepared himself through that diary. So when he asked me questions out of there, everything came back to my

> memory, just like it happened yesterday. So I wasn't scared at all. I couldn't sleep the night before. I was shaken up because I had never been in a courtroom, never listened to a trial. I didn't know what was going to be happening. He said he will help me along as much as he can but when it comes to the part for the reason for the divorce trial, the grounds of divorce, then I'll be on my own completely. But I said then, 'I'm not scared when he just gives me a hint where I have to start, and then everything comes by itself after.' So I was on the witness stand from 10:15 in the morning to 4:30 in the afternoon. It was sometimes so hard I broke out in tears. When it was too hard the judge gave me about five minutes recess and then we continued again. And then the hardest part came in the later afternoon when my husband was allowed to question me. He put all them lies out that I was supposed to answer and then he repeated the same questions three or four times until the judge got fed up with him and he said, 'Mr.Schultz, if you don't change your line of questioning right now you will be barred from speaking ever again.' And then he pointed to me and he says, 'And you don't have to answer if he starts with one more question about that. He is not worth an answer.' So then he had to change his line of questioning. But then it went okay. I had an answer for everything he fired at me. And when it came to the part almost that I couldn't hold back anymore about Anna – he had said to the judge that I had been a prostitute while I was married for 13 years, I had never been home in the evenings. And I says, 'You know what? This is exactly what you have been doing. I was always in bed at 11 o'clock but you weren't.' And then the judge gave me a sign to keep quiet and then he said to my husband, 'You don't want to hear what Mrs.Schultz has to say right now, do you?' And then he shut up. The judge must have known about it. Yeah! So then he didn't say no more. I was ready. I told Anna, 'I will hold it back as long as I can, but if I have to use it I will.' Because that was out of line completely what he was asking me. So I think now the judgment got handed down next day. And the lawyer told me already before it was handed down, if I had seen the judge didn't make any notes as long as my husband was on the witness stand, and he could tell his side of the story but the judge knew that this was all lies so the judge didn't make any notes of it. So he said he is pretty sure that I'll get half of everything and he has to give it up. But he doesn't want to. This is now the hardest part. He is starting to harass me again and the judge granted me permanent restraint order against him, but he just won't listen. He yelled to the judge when he was reading the judgment, 'This court is all corruption!' He yelled and he yelled to the lawyer that he is a drug dealer and a dope addict and the psychiatrist that testified for me, he called him a quack. In court my husband called my son-in-law and Anna's boyfriend was there too, he told them too in front of everybody that they were just dope dealers. So the judge knew that he doesn't know what he is saying anymore. So we'll see what's going to happen.

Heidi felt powerful going to court, as we see by her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerful?." She also tells that she felt powerful because she had learned to read and write in English.

> Oh, I have felt powerful when I went with my lawyer to court. Then I thought, 'I know I am right and I know all my past by heart. I just can answer any questions that they want to know.' And I had all the proof that I was married and that the children are mine – all the things that my husband denied. And I knew all what was going on through the years in our business, because I did all the bookkeeping and I was up to date with everything.
>
> And I knew now the language, that if something like that had come up maybe 15 years ago I wouldn't have felt that powerful because I couldn't speak or write. I never went to school one day but I learned to write and read. I can almost write as good as any of my kids. And so I felt powerful because I was ahead of my husband in that way.

Heidi explains how she learned English at her various jobs and from her children when

they started school, and how she used it to do the bookkeeping for the family business.

> It was when we lived on the farm in Paradise Valley, I had the radio on always and the old lady that I was housekeeper for, she listened in in the afternoon to a story about Ellen Brown. I can remember. And I couldn't understand much, but every day I learned a new word. And then when we came to Lloydminster, we bought ourselves a little radio and they were always talking numbers and that was the weather. But I didn't know what they were talking about, all these numbers. I couldn't figure it out. But eventually I got it. That meant the temperatures. And I really couldn't speak too much until I started working. I starting working in Lloydminster in the coffee shop. I had no other choice but to speak English. Well, on the farm I had to learn to speak English a little bit, but most of it I couldn't understand what they were talking about. And then I worked in Edmonton in a coffee shop and it went already better. Then I started working in a factory called Toni Lynn – they were sewing skirts and blouses and there were lots of German employees and the foreman was German but I learned a little bit more. But when I really learned to talk English was when my kids were small and they got friends with the neighbour's kids and they brought words home through the neighbour's kids. And then when they started school, my oldest one, Iris, she brought home little booklets and she was supposed to learn them words how to spell. And when she brought home the books from school, the reading books, I learned. She learned me how to read; she read it to me and then I read it back to her, and so every day I checked up what she learned in school. And I learned with her the words that she was supposed to learn to spell. And then I have to check her up if she spells them right. So with the kids I grew up; I learned how to spell and I learned to speak and I learned to write. I learned to read all by myself. And then when my husband started his own business, then I had no other choice but do the bookkeeping because he was busy working. So I kept track of the people, of the employees' hours, and I had to learn how to make payroll. And I asked on the unemployment office how to purchase them stamps at that time and then the Compensation Board, how I manage all that. So I did all right.

Generally in her marriage, however, Heidi felt powerless, as she explains in answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerless?"

> Powerless I feel against my husband when he always threatened me and he told me if I had forgotten that I am a fly against a bulldozer. And when I was living with him I knew I was his wife and I just had to do what he says. I really felt powerless and I couldn't do nothing about him, whatever he did, because I was his wife. And I had to think of the children and I want to keep my family together. So I felt really powerless.
>
> And I felt powerless when he want to go to Canada and I really didn't want to come because I didn't have no relatives and friends here, and I had my furniture all there and I knew I couldn't take it. And I couldn't do nothing about it because he told me, 'If you don't want to come I will never come back for you.' So I felt powerless! So I thought, 'I am married to him, I have to go along with him, no matter what.'
>
> I felt powerless when our children were supposed to be baptized and we were married in the Catholic church and my husband was Lutheran and he told me, 'They gonna be baptized in the Lutheran church or not at all.' So I felt powerless. What could I do? I don't know anybody here, didn't have my parents here, so I didn't have no support from anybody. So I felt really powerless against my husband. I just had to do what he says. So I thought, 'Well, they'd better be baptized in the Lutheran church than not at all.
>
> Powerless! Yeah! When he just bought trucks and we didn't have a car and I couldn't drive, and I was scared of the big trucks to drive. So I couldn't do what others do, take the car out and go grocery shopping. I felt powerless because I couldn't do nothing about it. He just wouldn't buy a car. He just bought trucks, no matter what. So I just had to go – wherever I

> wanted to go I had to take the bus or walk. Yeah!
>
> I felt powerless when I knew he did wrong with the Revenue Department. He cheated on the Revenue; he didn't want to report all the income. I knew it was wrong and I told him, I explained it to him, 'I read different; it has to be reported.' He says, 'You are crazy, you are stupid, you don't know nothing.' So I felt powerless! I knew it was wrong! I had to fill out the papers but I let him sign it. But I couldn't do nothing about it no matter how much I tried to explain it to him. Yeah, I felt powerless, that's right. The whole marriage I felt powerless, yeah.

Reflecting on her past, Heidi explains that she was independent and self-supporting and that she had worked for six years, saving her money for household effects, prior to getting married. She also explains that she didn't really know her husband (that he didn't get along with people, for example, and that he didn't like to spend money) until after they were married. When she was single she had seen him only on Sundays when they typically went out somewhere together.

> I was very independent before I got married. I was self-supporting. I worked in different places in Germany, I worked in different place in Czechoslovakia and I had always saved my money. And I thought, 'When I get married I want to have nice furniture and linen and clothes and dishes and everything,' because in Germany you don't get so many wedding presents like you get here in Canada. The bride usually has everything before she gets married and then just a few wedding presents, small wedding presents each wedding guest brings. So I had all that before I got married. I had bought my furniture with my own money that I had saved up from the time I was 17, when I came to Germany. About six years I saved up. And it was very hard to get a place to rent when we got married in Germany. I had to apply for a suite maybe a half a year before and it just happened that I got just one room in a house; but I didn't have no kitchen, just one bedroom. I had to share the kitchen with the lady, the owner of the house. She was a single lady. And I thought I could keep all this for the rest of my life, what I had saved up for and I had bought. But then my husband didn't get along with anybody and I had found that out just after we got married. I really didn't know him before we got married. We just seen each other on Sunday and then we went to a dance or to a show or we went for a drive with his motorcycle, sometimes with my sister and her husband. And I really got to know my husband after we were married. He didn't want to go anyplace on Sundays anymore, just to stay home all the time. My sister and her husband, they asked me sometimes, 'Aren't you coming with us to the show tonight?' And my husband said to them, 'No, we don't go no place because we have to save up money for our house.' Every show cost a mark those days. That would be like 25 cents, but for a mark he would get maybe 10 bricks or something like that. So he says, 'That gives us so many bricks for our house. So we just sit home and listen to the radio.' We didn't have no television.

Several months after she married, Heidi's husband became interested in emigrating to Canada. Heidi hesitated to leave her steady job – she was making more money than her husband was. Also, she was sad to leave behind her new furniture and appliances for which she had worked and saved for so many years. However, she finally agreed they could have a better future in Canada.

> And after about half a year or so my husband had met some school friends of his from Romania and they were emigrating to Canada. They had an uncle in Windsor, Ontario and they had written postcards, beautiful looking postcards and letters, and they filled their heads up with going to Canada. So my husband got the idea of going to Canada. And I didn't like it because I had a good job; I worked in a factory. I earned as much as my husband did as a brick layer. And he had a trade and he didn't earn more than I did. I did piecework in a big factory in Germany. And I didn't want to move all my things that I had bought. But he insisted; he said we go to Canada because there will be another war in Germany and to avoid that. He says everything will be bombed out, just like last time and nobody had nothing, all the houses and everything, completely demolished. So he said, 'When we build a house, that should stay forever, and we should go to Canada and build our future there.' So I let myself talk me into that and we went together to the consulate in Stuttgart and we looked at booklets. We had no idea where to go and his friend and his wife, they just got married and they had another uncle in Red Deer and that was in Alberta. I had no idea where Alberta was or Red Deer or anything. So they said, 'Why don't you come to Alberta? We could probably meet each other and maybe help each other out.' So I let myself talk me into going to Canada and we applied for a visa and then we had to go to another big city in Black Forest, it was another consulate or something. We had to fill out all kinds of papers and they want to know if we can pay our fare. And we had to go to doctor's examination; we had to be all in good health. And so I thought, 'Well, we passed all that and we'd probably have to wait a year or so until we get our papers.' But everything went so quick. We applied in April and we got our papers already by the middle of May and by the first of July we were already going. That was in July 1, 1954, we left Germany. So we had to sell everything really quick and I felt so sad because it was all brand new. But I knew my Mom could never afford a bedroom set like I had, so I gave it to my Mom for less than half price, just the bedroom set, and everything else I just gave her for free. I had a kitchen set and a dining room set, living room set and all kinds of kitchen appliances. Because we had different plug–ins in Germany, different power than here they told us. And I had bought a big radio, with all kinds of push buttons, in that factory where I worked. I got 35 percent off, so that time that radio was over 700 marks. That's just like I would pay here $200. It was a big radio and I really want to take it with me, and everybody said, 'No the power won't fit; it's no use.' So I had to give it to my brother. We just took 450 pounds of luggage, packed in boxes and suitcases. And my sewing machine – that was the only thing that I could take with me – it was a portable sewing machine. I still got it. So on July first, my Mom was really sad. She cried! She says she don't think she'll every see me again. And my father, he had hope, and he said, 'Well, when you are established, you come and see us.' And then my sister and my brother,they were all sad – they came all with us to the railroad station.

By the time they left Heidi no longer felt sad about leaving – a friend whom she had travelled with daily to the factory was also going. She briefly describes their departure and the trip across the Atlantic.

> And I had met a friend while I was going to the factory. I met her everyday in the train. She was already on the train when I came on the train; she lived about two towns ahead of me. So we worked the same shift and in the same factory, so every morning at five o'clock we were on the same train and in the afternoon we went home together, and so we went for the evening shift together. I had gotten to know her real good. Like my sister she was to me. She was two years older than me and she was a dressmaker by trade. But in Germany everybody bought ready made clothes in the store, so there wasn't much money in dressmaking. So she worked in the factory. And her husband was a plasterer and he wanted to go to Canada. And she didn't know anybody in Canada and her husband was from Hungary and he had the urge to

> go to a different country and make more money and build a house, because in Germany everybody was overcrowded and it was quite expensive to build. So we got together and we got to know each other really well and we were glad that we found each other. So in a way I wasn't too sad to go because I knew that we'll be friends and we'll stay together. So we emigrated together. We went on the same train together and on July 3, 1954, we sailed from Braemarhofen. The band was playing there on the harbour. It sounded all so – in a way sad and in a way optimistic. I can't describe that feeling, when I seen my suitcases all loaded onto that big ship. I never had been on a ship before. It was the seven seas where we sailed over. And for three days it was really nice. The food was great and everybody felt good. It was all immigrants; I think about 1800 people were on that ship; all young people. And there were dances every night and good food. But on the third day a storm came up in the North Sea, and everybody started to get sick. I wasn't sick at first but when I see everybody throwing up, then I had to throw up too. In the dining room all the dishes they were just flying around, and in our cabin the suitcases, they were just flying back and forth on the door. You couldn't even walk in there; you got these suitcases right in your legs. And the beds, they were going just like a roller coaster. I said I would pay just as much as I did, just if I could get off here. But there was no way of getting off. And my girlfriend, she had been six months pregnant already and she didn't tell the doctor because otherwise they wouldn't have let her go on the journey. So she was sick! Oh, was she sick! But we visited each other every day and we hoped that this will be over pretty soon, but it took 10 days on that ship. And then we arrived in Quebec City. When we sailed along the St. Lawrence River, then the waters were quiet. Then it was already better and people started feeling better and they started eating a bit. So we came to Canada. We came on the train then from Monday at one o'clock on July 10, we went on the train in Quebec City and we came Thursday in the late afternoon, July 15, 1954, we arrived in Edmonton.

Heidi mentions that after they were married, and especially after they arrived in Canada, her husband became very self-centered and bossy. She sees herself as having been "completely under his thumb" because she didn't know anyone to talk to, didn't know her legal rights and for some time didn't know any English.

> But my husband became different after we got married. He became so self-centered and so bossy and especially then when we were in Canada. We didn't know anybody and I couldn't go and talk to anybody and so he had me completely under the thumb. I just had to do all the time what he says. I had no idea what my legal rights were. I couldn't even talk English.

Asked, "What do you regret or resent in your life?," Heidi stated that she regrets she ever got involved with a person as mean as her husband. She then reiterates what she missed being married to him, why she stayed as long as she did and her need to finally leave.

> I resent that I got ever involved with such a mean person. In a way I don't regret that I was married for so long because I have three beautiful children. I first was very lonesome and homesick in Canada but through the years I got to like it and I made it my home. And I plan on staying here. I feel comfortable. I like to go to visit to Europe, my sister and my brother – my mom and dad they passed away. But I never feel at home anymore over there. I always say, 'My home is here.' My sister just wrote me when she found out that I had separated from my husband. She wrote me a letter and she said, 'Why don't you pack up and come back and stay with me?' I says 'No, I can't do that. In the first thing I have to fight for what I worked for,

and I'm not going to let it just go down the drain. I'm going to stand up for myself and I think it's time to do that. My kids are grown up and they are now that they can earn their own keeps and they are doing well. And I still have to support my youngest one because she wants to continue university and I'm glad for that. So my home is Canada and Edmonton. I love it here. This is my home and this is where I'm going to stay.' But at first it was very lonely. I was very homesick. I cried many times. If there had been a bridge I would have walked home and never come back. But there was no bridge and there was nobody to complain to, except in a letter. And I didn't complain too much because my mom and dad would have been worried sick. So I always wrote, 'I am okay and the weather is cold in winter and the summers are nice.' I was lucky I had good neighbours. But then my husband didn't want to associate with any neighbours. We had no social life for so many years. I missed that a lot. I love dancing and I like to go out sometimes for dinner. We could have, you know. We had money, we could have afforded, but my husband he just didn't want to go no place. He just watched TV on Sunday; he just lay down on the chesterfield all day and watched TV. And he watched TV all night until nothing came out of the television. He didn't want to have any social life. And he told me oh, I think since 1973 after we came back from that trip from Germany, he will never go with me on another holiday. So I thought, 'Well, there is nothing to look forward to.' But I thought, 'Well, even that I have to take and I have to just ignore everything. Just like all these years is blank to me until my son finishes university.' And then I thought, 'Well, if things get worse, I just hope that I can hold on until he finish and then I will get my youngest daughter through by myself. I go to work and I'll take a lawyer and I'll take him to court and the law should be that I should have half of everything.' Because I helped work all these years and I did all the bookkeeping and stuff and so I think I was entitled to half of it. So I am very pleased the way it turned out. But if I hadn't taken a lawyer and just would have waited until my husband gives me something I could have waited the rest of my life. I wouldn't have gotten nowhere. And he laughs his head off at home.

Heidi experienced an extremely difficult marriage. She credits her good upbringing and the love of her parents for giving her the strength to survive it.

When I was a little girl my parents gave me a lot of love. And they were very religious; they were Catholic and we went to church every Sunday. The whole town was Catholic and the churchbell rang on Sunday and so everybody got dressed up and went to church. And we kept on until we left Czechoslovakia. My mom was sick a lot and she was in hospital and we had to do all – we had a farm – we had to do all cooking and baking and sewing and working in the fields. We learned that from when we were very small because my mom was in the hospital. Then my sister and me we had to do everything, milk the cows. And my father was just one great god. I just loved him so much. And he took me mostly – I stayed with him out in the fields until the moon was already up in summer, and he told me stories from when he was small and when he was growing up and what his family life was like. And also my mom, when we were working in the fields, she always kept telling us how her family worked together, grew up together and loved each other. In winter we had to prepare for the harvest next summer. It was made out of straw, the tie-ups for the bundles. We prepared that in the barn and we didn't have no radio, so my mom and dad, they told us all about the olden days. And in winter when things were finished outside then everybody had geese, and we plucked the geese a couple of times during the year and saved up the feathers. And then on long winter days and long winter evenings, we invited the whole neighbourhood. There were a couple of tables put together in the living room and the feathers were all put out on the table and all the neighbours were sitting around helping, peeling those feathers, and we made feather beds out of it. And then everybody was telling stories and jokes and that was really fun. And then we had baked always lots of cake and cookies a day or two ahead, and then everybody had

> coffee and cake after. So we had a good time while we were growing up. And that good childhood meant a lot to me. Like all the rough times I had to go through now, I thank my mom and dad for bringing me up so – how shall I say it – in such a way that I am strong, that I could go through all this with my husband now. Because he never showed me any love for years and years and years. And the same with the kids; they always just came to me and cried.

Though Heidi looks back on her childhood with great appreciation for her parents, she nevertheless experienced hardships due in part to her mother's ill health and hospitalization, and in part to wartime conditions in Czechoslovakia. The result for Heidi and her sister and brother was that they had to do all the house and farm work. Heidi recalls that her older sister had a harder time than she did.

> My mother was in the hospital all the time, from overwork and poor health, I think. Later she was treated for cancer in a hospital on the Polish border, 200 miles away, and we couldn't go to visit her. Another time half of her stomach was taken away. So we did all the work for our mother. My father and one other man were the only young men in town, because all the other men were fighting in the war. So they trained my father to be a medical worker and he was responsible for the whole town, for no pay. We had a big blue cross on our house. So then we did all the farm work too, because my father was never home and didn't have time. He had to take care of all the problems. My older sister even had to quit school and stay home.

Heidi also was unable to continue at school as a result of the war. This was a big disappointment to her. Nevertheless, she felt relatively happy in German-occupied Czechslovakia.

> In 1943 I finished grade eight. I was supposed to go to the city to high school. It was arranged that I would have room and board with some people that my parents knew. But the people who had accepted me had to take in wounded soldiers because the hospitals were too small. So I had to cancel high school. I would have loved to study history and geography and composition. I was always first in all eight grades. I never made mistakes in spelling. I even beat kids older than me and won prizes and money. Under the German government it was nice, though. Everyone was happy, everyone had work, the schools were operating, and you could buy food.

The end of the war brought a change of government and conditions of marshall law, under which Heidi and her family and other German-originated families suffered.

> At the end of the war the Czechoslovakian government took power. Russian soldiers came in for half a year and we were put under marshall law, like in Poland. We could not go out, not even into the fields, without wearing a white armband with a big black N for Nazi, whether you were Nazis or not. Even to church we had to wear them. And nobody was allowed to go from one town to another without a permit from the police department. Our grandmothers lived in the next town and we used to go after church to visit them. So we had to go first to the police department and get a permit so if someone stopped us we wouldn't be thrown in jail. And we were not allowed to wear any clothing that points out to being German, like a dirndl style dress, or white knee socks, or leather shorts. We were German originally but after 1918 our territory was awarded to Czechoslovakia. Hitler got us back to Germany from 1939-1945. Then when the war was over everything was taken back by Czechoslovakia. Everyone was very sad

> because Czechoslovakia was communist. They took everyone's farm away and you had to work for pure existence. It was like forced labor and either you did it or you were thrown in jail. It started in May, 1945. I worked on a communal farm for about one and a half years, after the war ended, for two Marcs a day – that's 50 cents.But everything had to be bought with stamps and Germans couldn't have stamps, so we couldn't buy anything anyway.

Things got even worse as Heidi's family watched their friends being taken away to concentration camps and not returning, They were last to go. It was not long before they were taken with other German families to Germany by cattle car, as refugees.

> They slowly took the German families, one by one, and put them into concentration camps. We were the last ones to go from our home town. We had to leave home on the seventh of October, 1946. We were told that after 20 days in the concentration camps you would be allowed to go home, but you had to give the police your house key. But we knew that nobody else came back and the Czechoslovakian people came and looted their homes and took over their house. So we sensed that we wouldn't be coming back. But we didn't know where we were going. We and our neighbors were taken on a half–ton truck to a concentration camp. But we weren't mistreated there – just got lice. I remember we were searched at least three times and they took everything they liked and we couldn't say nothing. We only stayed three days because then the quota of 1200 people was reached. So then we were taken in cattle cars on the railroad and we were locked into them for a week with just a pail in the middle. We didn't know where we were going. A lot of people were crying but we were young and my father said, 'We are all together, anyway.' I remember exactly when we arrived on my 17th birthday in Germany in a camp. We stayed in one place on the German border for three weeks. It was a home for the blind. There was nothing to eat and we couldn't work so we got a bowl of soup with potatoes and spinach at noon every day. My brother and I went for a walk one day and found some turnips and carrots still in a field, so we had them to eat. We stayed at that place for about three weeks. Then they put us in a school. The kids were not allowed to go to school because there were so many refugees that had been forced to leave their homes. Then we had to go to the city hall every day and ask who has a shitty little room for us. Then after a couple of weeks we found an attic but there was only room for my mom and dad and brother. They had one single bed, and no window, and mice running all over the place. I found work at a butcher's shop and stayed there, and my sister did housework at a dentist's house. I earned 30 Marcs a month, but at least we had something to eat. Everything except potatoes was portioned out. There at that butcher's shop I met my friends – a girl from Hungary and another girl from Czechoslovakia. They were refugees just like me. We became best friends and I still write to them. I visited both of them when I went back to Germany.

As Heidi said, the good times she had with her family gave her the strength to survive the rough times. That her original family was important to Heidi is further validated in her answer to the question, "What do you value about yourself?"

> And I like my good upbringing. I thank my mom and dad a lot for that. My sister and my brother also. Well, it helped me through all these difficulties and well, if I didn't have such a good upbringing, I think my nerves would have given out and I would have ended up in the mental hospital like my husband wanted me to. It helped me being so strong because we were going to church every Sunday with the whole town and it was so nice. And I think back of it a lot when I was not able to go to church. I see all my neighbours walk to church on Sunday morning and I was not allowed to go. And I thought, 'Someday that will change. I don't know how or when but when it does I'll make sure that that will never happen again.'

In contrast to her own experience, Heidi explains that Deiter was not given much love as a child. Born into a family of 14 children, apparently he received little attention from his busy mother and was often beaten by his father.

> Deiter came from a big family. There were 14 kids and they had a lot of hired people. They had a big farm in Romania and their mom and dad were so busy that they didn't have time for each kid, to look after better. They were all more or less to themselves I guess. But I had only one sister and one brother, so we were just the three of us, so we were really close. We worked together; we had fun together. On Sunday, my mom and dad, they took us places. But I guess my husband's family, they went maybe once or twice a year into the big city and they bought some clothes or some material to make clothes. My mom sewed dresses, sewed all our clothes and we learned as soon as we could sew, we learned in school real early. In grade three in Czechslovakia all the girls had home-making in school. And in Romania, my husband's mom, she knitted and sewed everything for all those 14 kids. But they didn't get such individual attentions as we did. My husband's father was really strict. My husband kept telling my kids and me how strict he was. They just got licking and licking every time they just did a little bit something wrong. They didn't explain much to them, that they should have done a different way. They expected; they just gave them a licking if they didn't do right away what they said. To me he sounded really mean.
>
> So my kids lots of times said, 'Dad is just like his father, just mean all the time and not loving.'

Heidi mentions above that she does not regret having stayed in her marriage as long as she did, because of her children. In several places throughout the interview she tells how she reasoned she would stay in her marriage so that her children could get an education, knowing she could not afford to send them to university herself. In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?," she first responds that she values her family - her children, explaining how much they have meant to her in the past and the present.

> What do I value? My family! My family was always first to me. I love my children and they love me.
>
> My family means everything to me. I like to help them along whenever they need me. Like my oldest daughter now, if she couldn't make the house payment - she is expecting her first baby and she can't go to work - and if she can't make her monthly payment that she would be short of money, I could help her out. And if she is sick I could help her out. And also if I am sick, and I was sick - when I was sick those were the only ones that came to see me in the hospital - my kids! Sometimes I was so depressed I thought, 'I don't want to live another day.' But my kids came to visit me; that boost up my spirits and I said, 'Hey, I have to live. I can't give up. They still need me.' And my youngest daughter, she always says, 'Mom, when you get old, I'll take care of you.' That's why she went into medicine; she wanted to become a doctor. And she worked two summers in the Alberta Hospital. And she loves me really. And I says, 'And I will always stand up for you, no matter what happens, and as long as I live I'll look after you.' And my son, he is just one great guy. He loves me very much and I love him. Whenever he is out of town he calls me every Sunday. And sometimes the phone calls are short but them come from far away. So I am always glad to hear from him and he is glad to hear from me. Now he is staying with me because I'm scared to stay by myself. So he says, 'Mom, I will never leave you. I'll stay with you as long

> as you need me.' And I think that's great! And on Mother's Day they never forget me. Since they were small they always brought me something on Mother's Day. If they couldn't buy nothing, they made something and gave it to me. And so on Christmas or on my birthday. My husband never gave me nothing. So the kids, they're always good to me. Very important!

Heidi also values the security she has earned through her own hard work, represented in the rental properties that were finally awarded to her in her divorce settlement. Again she refers to the Alberta Property Law which entitled her to half of the family property.

> And I am glad that I worked so hard, that now the divorce came through I own something and I like to take care of it. And I know that I don't have to go to work the rest of my life. I'll be secure.
> What does this security mean to me? Well, I see now if I would have stayed in Germany I had had a different life. I wouldn't had to work so hard but here I had a hard start and I kept going and we saved up every penny and we invested it wisely and I took care of it. And so it wouldn't have maybe worked out as good if that Alberta Property Act law didn't come in when it did. If I didn't stay with my husband for so long, endured all this misery, I wouldn't have ended up this way probably. Because in the earlier days, well if they would have believed his lies, I would have maybe ended up with hardly anything. But this way – that's why my husband got really mad when he heard on the news on New Years Day, 1979, that the new Alberta Property Act law came in effect. And then he told me, 'If that is the case, I will get rid of you one way or another, even if I have to kill you.' And that really scared me! That wrecked my whole Christmas holidays! And he wanted to buy a gun. My son had bought him a little carpet and he said he should take that back, he wants a gun. And I said, 'What for?' He said to keep us all in line. Anybody steps out of line he's going to let them have it. Well I said, 'That did it! If that is the way he wants to keep his family together, with a gun.' I said to my kids, 'Forget it! That is no family no more. He is out of his mind.'

The freedom she is now experiencing since leaving her husband is also something Heidi values. She mentions ordinary kinds of activities – going to church, visiting friends, using the telephone, choosing a T.V. program – which she appreciates now, having been denied the freedom to enjoy them during her marriage.

> And I am able finally to go to church again. I was not allowed to do that for 15 years. And I can see all my friends again, that I didn't have for so many years. I am allowed to speak freely on the telephone. I was not allowed to do that for so many years.
> But the freedom I have now feels great! It feels really great to be able to go to church on Sunday. I couldn't do this for 15 years. To meet my friends – they all go to church – and also the freedom that all my friends come and visit me. Nobody came to visit me anymore because my husband was so much against the church. Whenever the subject of church came up my friends were ready to leave. And it came to the point that they didn't want to come anymore because he was so hateful against the church. And they didn't want to hear that. And now they are all relieved. We can phone each other, we can visit each other, and oh, it is so nice! And he is jealous of that. That's why he wants me back, because he knows that he is not doing so great. Let me see. Well, we can listen to any TV program we want to. And my son, he had a stereo for quite a number of years, he was not allowed to put that stereo on. The kids were kept like hermits too. They were not allowed to go to a show, they were not allowed to listen to the stereo. As soon as they put the stereo on he told them to go outside and work some more. Or they were not allowed to participate in any sports. Neither was I. Sometimes I thought, 'We'll go together to a swimming pool or play tennis or something.'

He didn't want to have none of that. He said, 'There is work to do. Go and work if you are not tired enough.' We only went fishing on a Sunday afternoon. That was the only enjoyment we had, and the kids didn't enjoy it too much either because the kids like to go on a picnic, not stay on the boat all day long from morning till night and catch fish. Didn't even catch any. They like to stay on shore on the picnic ground and so did I. When the kids were smaller we used to go for picnics and they just loved that. But then he didn't want to have picnics. He said, 'There's too many strange people around the picnic grounds.' He likes it better out on the lake where there is nobody. He didn't want to associate with anybody. He says he don't need any friends. All his friends are in the bank and he don't need anybody else. So the money destroyed him! The money went to his head and so he thought he don't need anybody else. He don't need no church, he don't need no family, he don't need no friends.

Finally, Heidi explains that she values her friends and neighbours. She recalls a particular friend who gave her motherly advice about raising her family, and others who cared for her children when she was in the hospital, ill or having her babies.

But I value my friends and my neighbours. I had a good neighbour in Mr. and Mrs.Wilson. They were neighbours to me for 13 years. They lived right beside us and I got a lot of support from her. I felt like she was my mom. And she told me one time she said, 'Home is where you make it. And it all depends on you. If you want your children to have a nice Christmas, make a Christmas tree and make your home feel like Christmas. If you don't, then the kids will be deprived of that happiness. And so you should make the best of it. And if you are happy the kids will be happy and everybody will be happy. The whole family is happy.' And I see that is true. When I think back of Christmases that we had together when the kids were small, everybody was looking forward to the Christmas Day and we always had parcel opening on Christmas Eve and it was always very nice. Everybody dressed up and we had the big Christmas tree and house all decorated. And as the kids grew up they decorated the house and they decorated the Christmas tree. And I had shown them how to set the table nice, especially for Christmas, or birthday parties. If the mother doesn't make birthday parties for the kids when they are small, and they see it from other kids that they have birthday parties, I felt, 'It isn't right if I don't make them a birthday party.' So they still remember, they still remember the mother for doing that. And then my neighbour told me also, 'The way you are dressed while your family is growing up, that's they way the kids will remember you for the rest of their lives. And what you do with your kids while they are growing up, they will also remember that for the rest of their life. On every picnic you take them or on every camping trip you take them, they will remember that.' And I know it's so. We took always pictures and I bought each of them albums – two, three albums they have full already. And when they look back at the pictures, they say, 'Oh Mom, this was a good time! We had a nice time together there!' And then we bought a movie camera which was even better when we went on holidays to Germany, and we made so many movie films. And then at Christmas time, we all come together and look at movie films that we made when the kids were small. Oh, everybody likes them. So I give my neighbour a lot of credit for that. She taught me a lot of things that my mom would have told me probably, but my mom was far away. I lived now 26 years, 27 years in Canada, so I didn't have no mom or no sister or no brother to go for advice or to ask something. So I got to value good neighbours. They helped me when I was sick. They helped me when I was in the hospital to have a baby. And my friends. I value my friends a lot. When my kids were born and we lived on 107 Avenue and 109 Street and I had a good neighbour and I had two friends. They both took one of the children when I was in the hospital with my third one, they took care of them for a whole week, each of them, and they never ask for nothing in return. Or I had my tonsils out and one time I had hemorrhage and I had to go to hospital and my

friends took care of my kids. So I always valued friendship. They were strangers actually to me, but we were friends now for 20 years. But then my husband got into a fight with her husband because my husband called me names and put me down and our friends didn't like that. So they wanted to straighten out my husband but he didn't want to hear none of that so he quit their friendship. I had to call them up by telephone and tell them, 'You are not allowed to come here anymore.' Oh I felt so bad about that! But now we're getting together again. From the day I got separated, I called everybody up and we are in contact almost every week with each other. So I value friends and neighbours. It's always good to have good neighbours.

About herself Heidi also has a positive attitude. Asked, "What do you value about yourself?," she described herself as straightforward, honest, decent, a hard worker and as able to get along with anybody. She also values that she is a woman.

What do I value about myself? What a question! I think that I am straightforward, I am honest, I am decent, I am a hard worker, I can get along with anybody. I like my good upbringing from my parents. I am straightforward; I mean what I say. I don't like liars or cheaters, and I keep myself on every place I work that I can come back anytime. The places I worked, I am still friends with those people after maybe 30, 40 years. I get along with anybody wherever I work – is it in a factory, or with people that I worked in a restaurant. I worked in a butcher shop, I worked on a farm, I worked here in factories and coffee shops, I did housework, I had lots of tenants over the years. I treat everybody fair and I expect always the same from the people that I work with.

Let's see. What else? I'm honest. I don't like lying and cheating. I feel always if you keep yourself honest you don't have no trouble. People trust you and you trust them. People leave me alone in their house for days, sometimes longer than that. I worked for people, older people. I handled a lot of money. I worked in a restaurant – the owner was 60 or 70 years old and the wife too – I run the whole restaurant. They had also a butcher shop. I handle a lot of money and they trusted me. I says, 'I get paid and money doesn't bother me at all.' So everywhere I work, they like me and I like them. My husband never even liked it in a hospital. He complained about everything – about food and everything. Not me! Wherever I eat I can eat anything. And I am satisfied with the smallest present. Or if somebody offers me a meal, no matter what it is I will eat it and even if it doesn't taste what maybe I would make different, I don't complain. It's all right to me as long as it's something to eat. Because I went through times I would have been glad of potato peels. So I think everything is all right and you don't complain too much and get along with anybody.

And I work hard. I always feel you pay somebody, you expect a certain amount of work. And I never hesitate on anything. I learned to work fast because I worked on assembly line in the factory. And I worked hard on the farm in Czechslovakia when we had our farm. We worked always till we couldn't see anymore at nighttime and got up early. And I always felt happy on the farm. I liked it! In the factory I felt happy. You got paid good. And in Canada you had to work hard because you couldn't speak the language so you didn't have the right or the opportunity to complain. And you were glad of every penny that you got paid. So you had to work hard. Then I worked again on assembly line, like in a factory here in Toni Lynn, in GWG, in Reynolds. You got paid by the piece. And even if you worked as hard as you could, you hardly could make any money because it was so poorly paid. And for myself, I always had to work fast because there was a lot of things to be done. And when you bring up kids beside all the work, you learn to get quick in everything, is it in cooking, in sewing, in cleaning. There a woman's work is never done. No matter how hard you try.

So now I get along with anybody. I never had no problems as long as I live, except with my husband. You could not please him no matter what you did. No matter what I said or what I worked or what I cooked, or what I

> baked, or what I cleaned, it was never good enough. He was always complaining and that really got to me. That depressed me sometimes so much that I thought, 'The heck with everything!' But I thought, 'Someday, someday I'll get out of this. I'll free myself from him and then I'll be better off.'
> So, and I am decent. I think I treat everybody fair. What should I say? That is a hard question to answer. Like I said, I don't like no liars or cheaters. I do what I think is right, and that's what my doctor advised me to do when my husband told me that I have to stay in the basement until the lawyer sorts it out. I was so depressed I just kept on crying. I couldn't stop anymore. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat, so I went to the doctor. And he said too, 'You should do what you think is right for you.' Nobody could tell me what to do. But I should make up my mind. He said, 'If you want something bad enough, you'll find a way to get it.' And my lawyer told me the same thing. When I asked him, he told me that I should move out from the house, that I should get away as quickly as possible. Then I asked him how could I find a place to live because my husband told me I am not allowed to go anyplace except to the Safeway or to the doctor. And the lawyer said, 'Where there is a will, there is a way.' And I have to find that way myself. He cannot help me with that. So I knew what I had to do. I just had to find a way. And I found it. And when I found my way out of the house, then I told myself, 'I am never going back.' I am glad I made it and I said, 'I rather sleep on the bare floor in a place that I call my own, than one more day with that husband of mine.' So I got free and I'm going to stay that way. And now I got my divorce and I'll get my final papers in February and I don't regret it for one minute. And neither did the judge. The judge said the testimony that he has heard in two days assures him that there is no doubt in his mind to grant me this divorce. Then I thought, 'Then that is what I want. I cannot live with that man anymore. There is no way of going back.'
>
> But what do I value about myself? It's great to be a woman! You get complimented and well, what else? I feel good when I dress up and have my hair done. I feel good! I feel good to be a woman! Yeah! I wouldn't have it any other way.

That Heidi feels positive about herself is further validated. Asked, "What do you dislike about yourself?," Heidi confidently stated, 'Nothing', and went on to explain.

> Nothing. There is an old saying: 'If you don't like yourself, you don't like anything else.' No, how does that go? 'A person that doesn't like themselves doesn't like anybody else.' I always liked myself and I always think the things I say and do are me. And I can't pretend I am anybody else. I always think my friends, if they don't like me, I can't pretend to be anybody else. I am just the way I am.

Heidi's positive self-image is also evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you think about this saying: 'It's a man's world'?." She states that she disagrees with the idea, pointing out that she has worked as hard as her husband, that women's work in the family is valuable and that while in general men may be physically stronger than women, they aren't better at doing everything.

> Oh, I don't think much of that. All the years I am as a woman I work just as hard as my husband and I don't think so. There is too much that I can do. Like he says he is always the boss and he has to look after everything and he has to see that the kids get raised right. Well I don't think so. That's a woman's job to raise the kids and look after the whole household. Because from when they were small as a baby, the man never wakes up and feeds the kids and change their diapers. The woman always has to do that. And I feel the woman is the backbone of the family. That's the way I felt. And my kids

> thought so too. My kids used to say, 'If it wasn't for you Mom, our family would have been long apart.' I don't think it's just a man's world. There is certain things that a man can do maybe better, like trades people. There is a lot of work that women are not able to do in trades. As a bricklayer a man is stronger than a woman, and so maybe in several other jobs that a man can do better, but there is certain jobs that a man can't do what a woman can do better. And nowadays, the women are catching up to a lot of the men's jobs. I think any office job a woman can do just as good as a man.

Finally, in her positive response to the question, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?," Heidi again demonstrates her positive attitude toward herself. She believes that changes in law have helped women and sees a need for women to stand up for themselves and speak out.

> I think its great! If it would have stayed like 100 years ago, then we wouldn't be as good off as we are today. I think it was time that women stood up for themselves and spoke up and I admire everybody that does so. There is not too many left that are just plain housewives. I have some neighbours that couldn't have done what I did. They told me so and I know so. They are totally dependent on their husbands. I know one neighbour, she never rode a bus in Edmonton and she lives here a couple of years longer than I do. Her husband drives her everywhere. 'Well', I said, 'if I had been dependent like that, I would still sit in the corner and ask if I am allowed to come out.' I think it was time that the women got a say in their lives. Yeah. It was really good that the Property Act came when it came. I think it should have been done long ago. I think in other countries, like in Germany, it was years ago that the wife got half when they got divorced. I think Canada was way behind with laws like that. And I just heard today on the news that they made a law like that now in effect, for commonlaw wives. It depends how many years they live together, but there was a lady, she lived 13 years with some man and she got now half of his business or whatever. She was awarded that in court today. She went with her lawyer to court and she said she is really pleased the way it turned out. It was on the news. An elderly lady, she must be around 55 or even more. She had all grey hair. They showed her on TV. She said she is really pleased.

J. Marcela

Marcela is a 30 year old woman of Slovak and Hungarian heritage, born in Canada. She was the eldest of two children in her family. Her mother has a high school education and works as a business executive. Her father also has a high school education and works as a business executive. Marcela has lived in several different countries, has attended five different universities, has achieved an undergraduate and graduate degree and is presently a PhD. candidate at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. She has worked as an instructor, researcher, translater, free-lance writer, editor and publisher. At present she makes about $7,000 per year from her academic scholarship and free-lance work. Marcela married at age 21 and was separated and divorced at age 27. At the time of the interview she had been cohabiting with her new mate for one week in a house they share communally with a mutual friend. Marcela is a member of numerous organizations ranging from political and professional to women's and self-help groups, at the local, national and inter-national levels.

Asked, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?," Marcela first responded that she was her "father's daughter." To her this means being both feminine and competent for her father, as he expected her to be. It also means being cultured, intelligent, and sensitive like he was, and being out in the real world, like he was. Marcela believes that the support she received from her father and from the men in her extended family and larger community gave her confidence to go out into the world, to achieve and to be independent.

> Well my first reaction would be something like being a father's daughter, and learning how to be both feminine and competent for him, as a child anyways. And as I grew older I think probably marrying. Being feminine and competent for my father was I suppose, what was expected, and it was also what I wanted to do. I think that I thought my father was the better or the best person in my family, which was a large, extended family. He was cultured and intelligent and sensitive and did everything in the world. And that's what I wanted to do, in order to be a part of the real world and not stay home. I think my first desire was to be as much like him, please him as much as I could, so that I, too, could participate. I think he encouraged that. The examples aren't particularly positive or liberating when I recall them, but I was expected to do things like to perform in family situations and on social occasions and rituals, such as weddings, Easter dinners, Christmas feasts, that kind of thing. Expecting me to be the hit of the evening. Be cute, clever, involving, convene, hold the family together. I always felt a sense of being the child who held all of the family together. I was the only female child in an entire extended family of 12 adults, most of whom lived together at some point during my growing up. I think it gave me a kind of confidence I have noticed a lot of my own peers didn't have, a desire to move outside the home. So I think at a very early age I expected myself to be a person who

> was capable of being independent and who could earn a living and who would go to university and achieve the highest degree I could. Being the centre of family activities I think gives you a kind of training. And again, self-confidence, to want to move beyond it. I can remember them telling me that I was a bright child and would of course do well in school. That I would do well in whatever activities I pursued. But being part of an East European family, I think, meant either assuming a role inside that community or not assuming one. And some children didn't. I was encouraged to be part of the community, to perform for them too. So I also performed outside the extended family for other Slovaks and Hungarians who were friends, who came to visit every Sunday, who had other children too. I just remember a lot of positive reinforcement from that community, and from the family. Not so much from my mother, but certainly from my father and from the men in the community, which I think is interesting when I think about it now. I think grandfathers were very important. They gave me fairly creative responsibilities when I was young - taking care of the books in the house, the library; be responsible for saying grace at all the family rituals, even though I might have been the youngest at the table. Being responsible for - well Christmas has just gone by - I can remember that I was the one who took care of whatever took place after the feast. Serving up the wine and the sweets and then taking all the parcels from under to tree and delivering them to people and telling people who would go first and who would go last. That kind of thing.

In contrast to the positive feelings she felt for her father, Marcela felt negatively toward her mother, perceiving her to be resentful and hostile. Being required to relieve her mother of household chores, she resented her mother's absence and felt betrayed by her. Further, experiencing her mother's demands and criticisms as unfair, she grew to hate her. In her desire to be unlike her mother, she rejected her mother's interest and work in the business world.

> From my mother I learned about resentment and hostility. I knew that I did not want to be like her or in her situation. What I think she tried to do was in her era very difficult - have children, be a conventional wife and mother and have a job all at the same time. My whole life she never stayed home. She wanted to be a leader in her job area - everything from stenographer to managerial, somewhere in that business area. And she of course got much more affluent as time went on. The more affluent she got and the more competent, I think the more angry she got about having to maintain a home, a husband and children. And she didn't have very much time for her husband and certainly had very little respect for me as an adolescent. I really remember that as a big turning point. I think I had almost an idealistic childhood and infancy, which I tend to romanticize, I know now. But in adolescence, a lot of it I can't remember, because I do remember that as incredibly painful for me, because of her. She would do things like the more invitations I had to go out or be active - I remember I was writing poetry and short stories in high school and we formed little groups of creative writers and drama groups and things like that, which had to of course meet after school and on weekends. And the more involved I would get in those things, the more tasks she would have for me to do at home, the more she demanded that I didn't go out on weekends, the more she made sure that I couldn't go out after school or that I had to be home before she was, in order to make dinner. That really became a bone of contention, my having to prepare meals and do all the laundry for the family after age 13. And when she came home she always said she was too tired and stressed to spend very much time with me or the other kids. And I felt very lonely and betrayed. I didn't seem to get very much attention from her at all. Just chores and tasks and very often disapproval that I hadn't done it well enough. I really hated her.

> And so I knew that I did not want to be like her, thinking about your earlier question, and that I wanted to get away from her and her life style as much as I possibly could. And the more I tried the more she resented me. I tended toward the creative arts and away from anything that she had anything to do with, like business or stenography or accounting. I became a hippie as soon as I could, not because I really believed but because money and material was so important to her. And I have nothing against them as such, but I just knew that I couldn't be like her. And of course my father's affection for me, I think, was contradictory in those years. I think he thought I was very special and my mother resented that probably. And so he seemed to withdraw his affection too, in order to please her, in order to keep her satisfied. I really remember my teenagehood as being caught in between them and desperate for the affection and attention I had received so fully when I was young. I left home very early, when I was 17, as a result.

In spite of her angry feelings toward her mother, Marcela was always glad to be a woman. She saw in her grandmother, whom she considered to be ideal, the potential for women to be creative and strong, nurturing and capable. Women, she thought, were privileged to have this potential. The resentment she sensed in her mother she believes came from her mother's own pain from being in strife with the world. Thus, Marcela saw in her mother a woman capable of achieving and with a potential to nurture, but thwarted by her own resentments. Conversely in her father she saw a creative and sensitive man, who was incapable of acting but who was a source of affection.

> I was never sorry that I wasn't a man; I was always glad that I was a woman. I thought, I guess, when I was younger, that a woman was someone who was potentially more creative than a man, and that was good. Women didn't have to do things like my mother did, didn't have to be business-oriented like most men were. And that was positive. My grandmother was an artist and I saw her as a kind of ideal woman. She was also a nurturer, and yet my own mother wasn't any of these things so maybe that's why I can't answer the question very well. I thought that the most unique women in my life were creative and strong and nurturing and took care of everything. That was it! I mean they took care of everything! All the men in my family were incompetent and I didn't see many men outside of the family who were heroes. Most of my heroes in my immediate life were women so I didn't think that they had it bad off or that they were somehow underprivileged. I saw them as privileged. That's it! I saw women as privileged! Because they were creative and had these capacities to nuture and develop human beings and to take care of everything. I suppose I saw them in strife with men a lot of the time and during adolesence that would have been important, but I can't remember a lot of it. I really thought more like a woman was someone who had to be in strife with the world, especially if she had talents. That idea came from my mother's own contradictions, which I saw as so deep rooted and so painful for her all the time, so painful that I think she had to blame her own children for it. I can't think of anything more specific. Back to my father, there was a contradiction then too. There was I think, a combination of a desire for recognition - that I needed his affection and that men offered a kind of affection that my mother or women didn't offer - and at the same time a disrespect for him and for the men in my family at least. I saw my father as creative and intelligent and giving, and as incapable of acting on it. That's what I saw. Then women tended not to have those other qualities - that's not true, my mother didn't but I suppose women, if I remembered women from the rest of the world - I don't see them as housewives. Business women didn't have those qualities, that's what I mean. They didn't have those creative qualities. And yet they were capable of acting, were

capable of doing, taking care of things.

Marcela wanted for herself to be the best of both parents, like her grandmother was. She also wanted to be womanly, in the sense of being intimate with men.

> And I guess I thought it was possible to do both. My grandmother seemed to do both. And I wanted to do both. That sounds more or less simplistic now, doesn't it, after we've gone through all this? But maybe, maybe, maybe! I also knew that I wanted to do it away from them even though I was terrified too. And when I think was a reasonably early age. And Cheryl, I never wanted not to be womanly. No matter how early feminism came into my life, I never ever wanted to be, for lack of a better word, unfeminine or especially anti-men in my own personal life. Now, objectively speaking, I think I can muster as much hostility and indifference to men as anybody else, but personally I knew, or I always felt that I always wanted an intimate relationship with a man. And that certainly has something to do with understanding what a woman is or how I saw myself. It was important. Men confirmed womanhood for me - being intimate with a man.

Why Marcela perceived her father as intelligent and nurturing, but incapable of acting, becomes clearer as she explains that he was an alcoholic, who frequently needed tending. Her brother, who was physically handicapped, also needed tending. Thus from the men in her family Marcela learned that men were incapable of taking care of themselves.

> You see, the two men in my family, my immediate family, would have given me the impression that perhaps men need to be taken care of. For two reasons. My brother had rheumatoid arthritis all of this life. He got it when he was eight years old and he was probably physically handicapped, I mean seriously handicapped, for all of my adolescent years. During those years also, probably partly related, my father was an alcoholic. Probably not chronically, as chronically as some men, but he drank regularly. And the two of them needed to be taken care of by someone, under different conditions. My brother needed to have his meals made and needed to have things done like massages and he needed splints to be put on his body and he needed to be helped into bathtubs and out of doors. And my father wasn't home very much, and when he was and was drunk, he needed consolation. That one's a two-pronged thing for me, because on the one hand I might have said to myself, 'Gosh, he certainly needs a lot of care and he isn't strong. He's not a doer like my mother is. He is on the other hand a thinker.' And I think my feelings about that are a bit contradictory, because men, then, tended to be thinkers and women tended to be doers. So I had said to you before that he shouldn't be taken as seriously because he can't act or he can't act in a systematic fashion, but on the other hand I must have thought that the self that he revealed when he had been drinking and listening to Schumann and reading the Bible, the best poetry of the Bible out loud to me, meant that he had certain talents that the only other woman in my family did not have. And I chose to affiliate to that. Also, if my mother was always busy and the other two needed to be taken care of most of the time, I don't really think that I had a whole lot of sources of affection and love and understanding. And if, when he was drunk, I could be close to him, and at the same time get all this high quality stimulation - intellectual and emotional, then I think it's reasonable that I would try and work on that line. Win his affections so that I would have more of him at least, or more of someone who I thought was intelligent and could give me love.

Further discussion of her family leads Marcela to the conclusion that deep down she recognized her mother's virtues – that her mother was quietly secure in her achievements while her father was not. Consequently, it was from her mother and not her father, that Marcela received encouragement to go to university and to achieve in the world outside the home. It also becomes apparent that the resentment and anger Marcela perceived in her mother was in part her reaction to an insecure, alcoholic husband.

> Secretly I knew, I had the sense that my mother was a better person than my father because she was more educated and quiet about it publically. And my father was always insecure about it. Always, always, always! And I think that she thought I should go to university so that I could be independent. She never said things to me like, 'Go so you'll have something to fall back on,' or 'You'll find a better man there'. Never, never, never, ever! My father just largely ignored the question of education. I always sensed that in his heart he did not want me to be better than her, better educated then he and she. My mother never submitted to my father. Never, ever, ever! But I had the feeling that she did not judge situations accurately. It was not worth her emotional energy to fight all the time, to stand up all the time to a man who was obviously emotionally crippled a lot of the time, inebriated a lot of the time. And despite all of that I admit, and everyone admits, his stature as a human being. He is just a magnetic person. And I think that really, she just really couldn't be objective about it. She loves him so passionately. Everybody seems to – everybody who meets him either really loves him or hates him. And she let that get in the way all the time. Which meant that if he said anything to hurt her or to make her feel more insecure than she already was, she would fight and rebel and fight and yell and scream and persecute and torture and not speak to him for two weeks, and as a consequence not speak to me. That emerges as a great memory. 'Don't say anything to offend your mother because she'll fight back and then she won't talk to you for two weeks.' That logic informed my behavior more often that I could ever tell you. That I concluded on my own. I did not want her wrath. Despite how often I didn't want it, I incurred it and there were times when she offended me so vituperously that I had to rebel and it was always against her, the way she rebelled against him. She would make me pout, she would make me fight, swear, yell, and act as immaturely as I thought she did toward him. Which is interesting. My mother, my self. But I really tried to achieve a balance. And her virtues emerge to me more often than not now, and I feel a lot of regret about the way I treated her when I was an adolescent, although probably not half as much as she feels about the way she treated me. And nobody gives me either tacit or explicit recognition for my accomplishments, for my articles, for my political work, for my degrees, all my fellowships, except for her. No one else in the family even notices them. I think my father feels it is in his heart but is afraid to admit it to me. She, on the other hand, is very clear about what I have done and how positive it is.

Today Marcela appreciates the disappointment and frustrations her mother lived with, forced by the men in her life to be the kind of woman they thought she *should be*.

> Oh Christ, when I think, if I was a woman growing up in the 50s! She was 21 when she had me – she, who had aspirations to be – first of all she was a model when I was a child. Before she was a model she was asked to join some singing troup – she had a beautiful voice – and her father thought that was immoral so she wasn't allowed to go to voice school and to continue that career on radio. So that career was thwarted. Then she became a model

> and she was told that was immoral by my father so she had to quit that. And so then she went into the conventional secretarial stenographer role, but was bored and ended up in management positions all too often. But at the same time lived the contradiction. There was no way my father would have tolerated a woman who was not a woman – who did not come home and at least pretend to be his wife, and pretend to be girlie, and pretend to be dumb, and pretend to love her children. And I think she did, right? I really think she wanted kids. And for her all of this hostility and anger towards me especially, had everything to do with that. She wanted a career and she wanted a good life.

Comparing her parents, Marcela recognizes now that her mother had definite goals she set out to achieve. She also believes now that her mother was essentially more honest and capable than was her father, who tended to get by on his charisma and who depended on his wife to take care of the family.

> She did not want to be part of the ethnic community – she didn't want to be a Slovak, however, she knew its virtue too. My father just pretends that he's not Hungarian at all. He's just part of the Canadian, Anglo-Saxon ruling class. My mother isn't like that. And it just took me 30 years to find that out. She sees their virtue but she doesn't really want to be a participant. So I mean just her honesty about who she is and where she came from and where she's going – there's just a lot more there to appreciate than I would have understood as a young woman and adolescent. And she deals with professional situations better than he does. He wins by charisma alone. I mean you can see that but you can't respect it after a certain point. She, on the other hand, works toward professional assessments and agreements and just things you have to think about. He just acts on intuition and charisma and expects everyone to just be wooed by him. And they often are, unfortunately. He is usually right. So now I see the contradiction that she lived and how many near divorces she went through. Times that she would call the police on him and go to court and arrange yet another separation agreement. It was a hell of a lot of stress in a world which is sort of expecting women to be in the work force when it's necessary and expecting them to stay at home and make babies for the affluent 50s. It took a lot of guts to work my whole life, not to be with her children, especially when one of them was crippled. And why we all blamed her is still beyond me. Poor woman! She couldn't rely on him, and she went mad with him. There's no doubt about it! She was bored stiff! There were very brief periods when she was at home in between jobs. But she was always worrying about – I mean she had certain goals in life and she wasn't about to accept a little house in the inner city for 20 years. No matter what we think of material accumulation, you've got to admire her for making that effort continually. She knew what she wanted, she knew where she wanted to live, she knew who she wanted to associate with and she wasn't going to let his instability get in the way of that. And she also wasn't going to let her kids suffer. She wanted us to have the best. I believe that. Socially and culturally! Which takes money. At the time I hated her for it. New fridges and new furniture and new houses every year and a half. But now I understand. And she took care of all the family business. I don't think he ever spoke to a lawyer or a doctor or a telephone repair man in his whole life. Nor has he ever ridden a bus, even walked a block, I'm sure. He never arranged a bank account, a loan, a mortgage – he couldn't do anything if his life depended on it.

Although she now understands and accepts her parents' limitations, living with these problems as an adolescent was a painful experience for Marcela. Being constantly in conflict with her mother, feeling stressed and in pain much of that time, Marcela

remembers little of puberty.

> Puberty must have been horribly painful times because it's just a block. I don't know when I began to menstrate. I can remember wearing nylons and I can remember having breasts when no one else did in Grade five. I think those years were painful and so I don't remember very much.

That the emotional trauma Marcela experienced as an adolescent is still with her, is evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?."

> I resent my parents for playing around with my emotions when I was an adolescent.

Summarizing her feelings about her parents, Marcela explains that she now feels quite distanced from the members of her family, although she is committed to the ideas of family, community and tradition, and would want any future children of hers to know their heritage. She concludes that her view of men's potential was determined by the limitations she perceived in her father.

> Now I really feel like I'm quite distanced from both of them. I love them deeply and I'm committed to the entire family. And that's more because they're Eastern European and because of that notion about family and community and tradition, than because of who they are as individuals. I don't really feel they have a lot to offer me now. My distance from them is better for both of us. I can't expect them to live with me ever again. The only thing that would change that is if I had children I would want to live closer to all of them, definitely. And I would want my children to know their tradition, where they come from, the rich, rich, rich cultural heritage of my family. For that I have ultimate respect and I would definitely want little ones to be near them. And I know they'd be great grandparents. So, my father was who I wanted nurturing from – not so much because I thought he was the only one capable of giving it. He had both the sensitivity and the intelligence that I would have demanded from anyone I was intimate with. I'm sure you would too. So I came out of that, I think, with a perverted view of what all men could be and do.

Hurt by her mother, and let down by her father, Marcela yearned for something more satisfying. It was during this time that she developed a sense of spiritual life and a desire for meaningful relationships. She desired to develop intimate relationships with men which she believed would ultimately lead to happiness. She was in conflict about her relationships with women: she wanted to be liked by them and belong to their circle, but was hurt by their rejection of her in favor of men. Eventually Marcela rejected what she perceived to be the meaningless social life of high school, feeling more comfortable in the spiritual, hippie world that blossomed in the 1960's.

> But I thought intimacy in general was, and in some ways I still do, was the key to human happiness, was the answer to all the meaningless that the hippies and the Krishnas were talking about in the 60's. And I also thought that somehow it was asexual. I didn't really think about how I would get a man or how I would be abused in the process of getting a man. And I don't think I was ever really hurt. I also thought that in order to achieve meaning a young woman had not to spread herself around sexually, and I saved myself for my husband and thought that was pretty significant. In 1972 I was a virgin. And I think that that saved me a lot of heartache – holding off, whether it was right or wrong. And I can honestly say that before that I wasn't abused by men and I had what I felt were good, healthy, spiritual relationships with men – and with women, all of whom hurt me. I think that I discovered that women definitely care a lot more about men during high school than I thought reasonable. Not that I resented them doing so, but that I would be rejected or my friendship would be rejected or was on the line if a man came along. And I always thought that I wouldn't do that, or couldn't somehow. I'm sure I did before I was married. But I always thought it was virtuous not to. And so I was much more afraid of women than I was of men, although I wanted to be close to them. And actually by 17 I really wanted to have a close relationship with a woman, which didn't pan out. The woman now appears on the front cover of this book, here. When I saw it I couldn't believe it. It just freaked me out! But the way I was hurt by women was in making plans to do things with them and being rejected because a man came along. It was a contradiction. On the one hand, I had the impulse to be like them so I wouldn't be alone, and on the other hand, having this sense that there were higher experiences. And I really had this sense of there being a spiritual life, I suppose, that we should all strive for. And women couldn't fulfill me. They couldn't fulfill that for me. This was only achieved with men. What do you call a person who – an aesthetic? My mother and father say that I was like that when I was younger. I was anti-social. I don't believe it. I just don't think that the friends I had before I left high school could satisfy me. But I of course blamed myself at the time. I went to parties but I didn't really like them. I dated superficially for awhile but not for long. And soon I moved in hippie circles which was much more a consequence of what I thought was a meaningless social life in high school. The hippies of the 60's provided an environment in which it was perfectly reasonable to pursue spiritual and meaningful experiences with other people. And I can't be specific. That's my own forgetting again.

Marcela left home at age 17 to prepare herself for an independent life. She decided to study fashion and modelling – a career which would be 'superficially creative and yet acceptable for a girl to do.' She quickly learned, however, that the real reasons for the school was to teach girls how 'to get beautiful and to get husbands', and she left.

> And I had tried to do girlie things, Cheryl. I was allowed to leave high school early because I had a high standing – and I went to Atlanta to study fashion and modelling, at a very expensive private school, which my grandmother paid for. I thought it meant that I would have control, you know, that I would be able to make my way in the world at something I could be good at – something that was superficially creative and yet acceptable for a girl to do. I lasted one term. Four months. It was the most demeaning experience I've ever had in my life. It was disgusting for all the conventional reasons. It was an expensive little whorehouse. And I was so tight-assed and I had all these what I thought were sophisticated morals, and I just couldn't handle it. All the girls were there for exactly the same reasons – to get beautiful and to get husbands. And I really did want to be a fashion designer or a designer of some sort. So I didn't last. I couldn't handle the social thing at all, at all, at all! I hated Americans and I hated Atlanta and so I left. I moved to downtown Toronto with a girlfriend.

Although Marcela's father supported her decision to leave the fashion school, he criticized her for changing her mind – she was weak, she was a gypsy – and refused to support her financially. In the meantime her grandmother had died, so Marcela was left with no source of support. Marcela had already rejected her mother as a source of support, having learned that her mother would be affectionate only if she would cry and apologize to her. She was alone in the world.

> Leaving Atlanta really meant that I had made a choice to definitely, made a decision finally not to pursue what I thought were the conventional, feminine pursuits. That meant that I would become an academic of some kind. So I worked for a year to put myself through university. I went into the academic arts immediately, into comparative literature, without my parents' support. I think my father supported me in leaving the school. When I was down there I wrote a very long letter which he saved and which he continues to bring up every time we get the least bit close. It was apparently a 20 page letter about being a woman, and about men and morals and how I had decided to pursue a career, and that men weren't that important and I had made that decision. And that this route, this route of modelling and fashion was corrupt and immoral and I couldn't do it. His response was incredibly sympathetic, but on the other hand, he sort of felt that changing my mind meant that I was weak, and he wouldn't give me any money. That's an interesting one! That's something I've felt defensive about ever since. He has slotted me, I think, in order not to take responsibility for me, that I am perhaps special – I mean that I'm bright and I'm capable and I can live in the world by myself. But he thinks that I am indecisive or I change my mind a lot – around career choices, around men, around where I'm going to live, what city I'm going to work in. I'm a gypsy! He's Hungarian and he thinks that the gypsies are bad. And I'm one of them! And that meant not getting his affection too. So it is something that I'm very defensive about around him. Women aren't supposed to change their minds. It hurt me tremendously because I had put all my hope in his ability to support me and not in hers. And I had pretty much rejected her. I mean she rejected me too, there's no doubt about it. She beat me a lot when I was an adolescent, and I thought that meant that there was no support forthcoming from her. By then my grandmother had died too, which I think is significant. My grandmother was his mother. It meant that there was no one to support me, in my ideas and in my philosophy. My grandmother really was open to my doing whatever I wanted. But I just never considered getting support from my mother. I can't even recall. They were separated and back again and separated and back again. I can't even recall. When I was really lonely I would cry on the phone to her, I would apologize to her, I would do whatever she wanted me to do in order just to get some affection. I had learned – that was another thing I learned – that if I cried and was weak, she would like me.

When Marcela returned to Canada she worked in Toronto briefly and then decided to go away to university to get farther away from her parents. She wanted to be a part of the world of thinkers – her heroes – although she did not consider herself capable of being one of them. She saw herself as too emotional and sensitive and believed that true intellectuals somehow transcended this level of reality.

> Anyway, after I left Atlanta and worked in Toronto, I decided to go to university in Peterborough. I didn't want to live where they were so I went to Trent.
> Mother and father, their relationship became very tense and they tried to divorce, two, three, four, five times. I can't remember how many times. And I really did get caught in the middle of that, to the degree that I ended up losing both of them. I rejected my mother of course, so that my father would be supportive. It was foolish and naive and I know I made lots of mistakes. But when I went away to university the second time it was on the assumption that I was leaving and they didn't want to see me anymore. By then I was 19.
> I guess I saw professors as my heroes. Thinkers were my heroes then – writers and artists were my heroes and they were all at Trent, and I could be with them and I could learn from them. But I could never really be a part of them. I never really believed that I would be good enough. But it was where I wanted to be, it was where I thought the highest value of experience was. I had always believed I could be out in the world, but I don't think that really meant devoting myself to an intellectual career. I think by this time I had thought that I was too emotional and too sensitive and too lonely and too. . . . I thought about myself, and I always believed that great minds and certainly philosophers had not to think of themselves.

At University Marcela met a man who meant to her the end of her loneliness, the achievement of meaning, and a chance to experience an intellectual life vicariously.

> But gradually I had a fear of being alone and not having meaning, so I was married in 1972. I can remember the day that I decided to do it. And I thought – I think today my husband was an incredibly special person – that that corny goal of a meaningful life could be fulfilled by him. But I also thought that it wouldn't last – that I would eventually demand more or ask for more. And I knew the day that I said, 'Yes', that I would not stick with it. But at that time, and for where I was emotionally and very alone – I had no family by then, no one was speaking to me – it was what I had to do.
> And there I found my husband who I believed was a real philosopher and didn't think of himself, and if I was with him I would be like that too. Or it wouldn't matter anyways because, well, you can be accepted socially for what your husband is. Through osmosis I would be what I wanted. Through him! But that didn't happen, not successfully. The first few years I think it did.

As Marcela anticipated, the marriage did not last, for various reasons. She began to realize that her emotional life was as valid as her husband's intellectual life. At the same time she was discovering that she could be a successful academic, and this threatened her husband. Marcela concluded that like her father, her husband was weak and incapable, a judgment she now questions.

> But then I think I had discovered that being emotional and sensitive had an honesty to it that Barry could never have, because he was so wrapped up in being the Philosopher King. He, I think, faked a lot of emotions or faked not having them. And after five years of that I had decided that my experience wasn't as invalid as I thought it was. By this time the Women's Movement had come along and I was surprisingly successful at the university. I thought it was first rate. So I left him and chose graduate school pretty much – at this time we were competing academically and intellectually – which severed us. Especially as I became more successful. I think he was pretty threatened by it. But also I didn't like it – I didn't like seeing him weak in the face of that; I didn't like seeing him not be successful at university. There was no reason for it except stubbornness and laziness and all those things that the men in

> my family were. And I was all too quick to dismiss it or to dismiss him on some level. Foolishly so. I don't think I can say that I'm sorry I left him. I think I, too, had illusions about my ability to be a successful academic without him. You always think the grass is greener. I don't regret leaving him now, because I would never be what I am, had I been with him. But on the other hand, I made judgments that were incorrect.
> I think that even with my husband I assumed that I would – you know, one hides one's true thoughts a lot when you don't take someone seriously. Men are boys and they need to be placated and secrets need to be kept in order to get the emotional exchange and at the same time have all the independence you want. I really don't think that I gave a whole lot. And that protected me to do things that were more important. In the end, what did I respect? I think all through this, through adolescence and my marriage, I did think that I was more worthy of respect than they were. I was capable, and I didn't have to pull any punches, and because I was both a doer and a thinker. And I wasn't weak. I didn't need to be played around with, I didn't need to be told lies. And most of the women around me I thought didn't need to be told lies either. Including my mother, the bitch.

Marcela explains how she restricted her behavior and success at university in order to remain feminine in others' eyes and to not threaten her husband.

> When I was married, especially at first, 'we' could only tolerate quiet success. The relationship could only work if my successes were moderate and private. I got straight A's in my Honors year without having ever spoken up in a tutorial that had anything to do with the disciplines I respected the most. My belief was that I was more feminine and, therefore, easier to live with if I presented no real threat to my husband or his public image. I'm not sure that this image was of his making or mine. I only started to cultivate the courage to teach university courses when we were separated. When we were separated I also started to publish and certainly started to travel and to establish a reputation for myself.

In partial answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?" Marcela states that although she does not regret having left her marriage, she does regret the way she and her husband related in the marriage.

> I resent my husband for not giving me more chance to live out my errors, to be vulnerable. I regret having made a hasty decision about my marriage, although I don't regret now having left him.

Affected in the past by expectations that men were more intelligent than herself but less capable of acting in the long run, Marcela is learning that things can be different. She is presently living with a man who can both think and do, and be caring and sensitive. This means to her that the ideal of intimacy, which she values so highly, can be achieved – that she can find happiness in an intimate relationship with a man.

> And now the change for me is that I've found someone who is very obviously capable of living and acting in the world, who's a real doer, and who is capable of sensitivity and warmth and creativity at the same time. I wasn't surprised, initially. I must have thought that lots of men out there could be like that; I had just not found one that was such a perfect combination. I think that the surprise is happening now more and more as the relationship grows. I am more and more surprised by that combination. Someone who doesn't whine about what he has to do the next day, who can function in front of a jury one day and in a confrontation with a soupy woman the next day. Or

> vice-versa, deals with soupy men in his office privately, and then has to go to a women's group and answer their challenges. So for me to be a woman now, it means of course, I mean the answer is quite obvious - that I can feel fulfilled both professionally and at home. And that one person can contribute to both those parts of my life, and that I hopefully do the same. Still, when I want things done out in the public world I don't think very often I call a man, that's for sure. Outside of Mark and maybe a few others. When I left Barry I think it meant that I had chosen, that I would devote myself to a career and not to home building. And until just last week that's what I've always thought. And here I'm building a home with Mark.

That she does, indeed, still highly value intimate relationships, is verified in her initial answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> What do I value in my life? Intimacy has not changed. That's the most important thing. Intimacy means the highest order of interpersonal relationship I can achieve. That is what produces and reproduces meaning most regularly and most deeply and most comfortably. With men and/or women. Authentic intimacy can only be achieved with people who are authentic and that includes men and women. Women have, in our era, special character, specialized character. And in my milieu it's particularly flagrant. First of all, intimacy!

Marcela explained above that she had begun to realize, while she was married, that she could be a successful academic. When she left her marriage she proceeded to focus solely on building a career. She still believed that ultimately, men were intellectually superior and that in order to succeed she would have to ignore her emotional life, as they did. Nevertheless, she spent most of her time with women, finding support and comfort in their company.

> I went to several graduate schools. It was simply to cope with every new degree and with success and scholarships - that was what I had always hoped I would do. If I ever dreamed of myself being anything, it would be the successful academic. And I just lived out that dream to the best of my ability. And at incredible emotional risks - loneliness, not getting involved with very many men at all. I think perhaps when I finished my candidacy exams I realized that it was the end of the road and time to choose between continuing to pursue academia and taking a job in less academic milieu. And at the same time, interestingly enough, I decided to think more about myself, and my relationships, and intimacy. And that included men. Before this I think I was much more involved with women. They were everything! They meant support and social life and a comfortable intellectual environment. The uncomfortable one interestingly enough was the one I continued to emulate - the relationship I could never have was with a male professor. That was the one I wanted. I still had this horrible sexist evaluation of my instructors. The men tended to be the heroes. But that's actually unfair because in Alberta anyways, there wasn't a woman instructor in my department. And I could never have imagined a woman being as worthy, as philosophically sophisticated. Horrible admission I know, but .... She would be as hampered by her emotions and her weaknesses as I was or had been, so I assumed. And I learned to invalidate those emotional experiences, but I suppose lots of us did, in order to be successful. In the recent year I think that I've had, through a certain amount of struggling, to reconcile that. And I am working very hard, or have been working very hard to be just less dry and less psuedo-intellectual, and more upfront and more spontaneous, and to give my emotional life and my anxieties more credit than I ever did before.

During this period, sexual relationships were important to Marcela only in so far as they provided a means of obtaining physical satisfaction. Concentrating on her studies to the exclusion of relationships with men, she learned to satisfy herself without getting involved with her partners. This pattern has changed with her latest relationship.

> Before having this so-called, slight or even not so slight emotional reconciliation with myself after the candidacy exams, I think I was completely opportunist about sex, for two reasons. First of all I really did believe that the spirit was the important part of ourselves - that we share it with other people, and therefore sex just didn't express it and was a lower category of experience - none of which I believe now. In fact, none of which I have believed since I left my husband. But I really believed it earlier. It is an excuse, I suppose, not to get involved and not to be emotional - not to let go. And I never had trouble having orgasms, but I never, ever had them from intercourse, and I never liked intercourse that much. I did it. As long as the man was quick I didn't mind. And I just loved oral sex. Well I suppose I still do, but before this past year it was just everything. And since making an effort to validate my emotional experiences, as my psychological friends describe it, my attitude toward sex has changed - has transformed completely. And I now love intercourse and I always have orgasms through it and by it. And oral sex has just taken a much, much less important role. And I think that's telling. Before this I think I really used men, just to give me that thrill, for all my philosophy about it all. I make it sound like I was promiscuous or that I had a lot of sex. I didn't at all! But every time I did it was good. I just stuck with my man for a long time. Now I really feel like a woman and I really feel like I'm on the verge of integrating my head with my heart and all of my anxieties. I didn't want to give the impression that I was never at home with my body. But somehow I guess I thought intercourse was dirty. I must have on some level thought it was dirty. Or I think I was also just really, really selfish - I just didn't want to go through something that didn't give me pleasure. So I had all these rules about oral sex was okay because that gives me pleasure, and I was just incredibly curt and offensive about intercourse. Not that anyone ever minded. Thank God! Now it's great! But I feel like I've just discovered it. Actually I think it really didn't seem dirty after I left Barry. I think I had just learned patterns to satisfy myself. That's all I really worried about. And now I doubt that I'm much less selfish. Really I'm much less worried about time and how I should be reading or studying or writing. I can actually spend a few hours in bed now. A few times a week. I don't want to go too far! It's just a great new feeling to relax with my emotional self. I'm not great at it. I don't want to give the impression that I'm good at it. But I'm getting there. And being away from university, even for these three weeks, is helping a lot.

Marcela still struggles with being a woman in a world whose values are male-defined. The result for her is tremendous anxiety about her emotional life and the extent to which it can interfere with what she perceives as more important issues - philosophical thoughts, for example. Having babies is not an issue for the present.

> I think the predominant emotion I associate with womanhood now is anxiety. And even though I have tried to say that I am trying to come to terms with it and give it a credence of its own - a credibility of its own - I still find it incredibly heart-wrenching that women seem to suffer over things that are so much less important. Things like how other people think about them, how they just aren't as good as they should be at whatever they do, how they tend to spend more time gossiping than men do. I'm concerned for other women, and for myself. And I think that's still based on that whole value system that I

> had in university, that has something to do with this respect for all thoughts philosophical and no thoughts emotional or personal. But as I say, I'm working on it and it's really on the road to fulfillment. I'm convinced of that. When I left my marriage I started giving credence to my experience, but only a little bit. Only a little bit. And I think I still have one of the most moralistic and demanding sets of values by which I judge other human beings that I've ever seen. And I don't think it's good. I mean I think it says as much about my own insecurities as it does about people.
>
> I don't think about things like, well, like babies. I sometimes feel that I should, but I haven't been plagued with the thought that I should be having babies, even though I'm 30 years old now. And I sometimes have wondered, 'Well, is that okay?' But not seriously. I wouldn't make very much of that.

Marcela's anxiety partially stems from her belief that her emotional life (traditionally defined as the female realm) is not worthy of the energy it demands. Her belief is based in her own experience – experience which has taught her that it is difficult for a woman to get approval and be successful in a world ordered and controlled by men.

> For me, being a woman still means being intimate and successful. And having to cope with the world that just doesn't give credit easily. And when I'm being really honest I suppose it means getting the approval that I need from men and women in order to function to my best satisfaction. And I wish I didn't need it as much as I do. But I also now know that I can't pretend that I don't, which is what I did do all the time. I didn't talk very much about approval but it's pretty central. I think that every single one of these – some of them unrealistic – demands I made of myself were in large measure because I didn't get the approval I needed during adolescence, and during university even. I made sure, in fact, that I chose instructors and supervisors and colleagues who wouldn't give the approval I in fact needed, and those who did give it to me I discredited. You know, I assumed there must be something wrong with them, if they approved of me. It seemed to me that I couldn't do, I couldn't perform the functions academically or socially or culturally, but I should have been able to given my abilities, for my own satisfaction. That I, all through these years – ever since the age of 13 or 14, whenever it began – I pushed myself too much and too hard in order to win someone's approval. And not just someone's, I shouldn't say that. Win the approval of someone I respected, that is, the person who had those great philosophical values of the mind and the spirit, that most of the women I knew didn't have. And I think the contradiction was that people I tended to want the approval of didn't give it out. And I rarely did things just for the sake of satisfying myself, which is what a confident person does, I think. You do what you do because you like it and because you're comfortable with it and it satisfies you. And although there's always a part of that in me, I think that the important feature was that I did what I did in order to be confirmed. But society doesn't give credit easily to women, especially if they're talented. I mean I suppose they don't if they're not talented either. But a woman who is not talented, whatever that means, or who hasn't had the opportunity and the privileges we have to exploit our talents, doesn't suffer about it as much as I think we do. Or as I do, I should say. I have suffered unnecessarily about it.

As a result of her anxiety about her ability to be as intelligent as men, Marcela has found university examinations a trial. Believing deep down that men were intellectually superior, a belief reinforced by the fact that she had no female professors as role models, she was convinced that she could not succeed.

> For example, my candidacy exams were tortuous. Every single written exam was tortorous - anxiety-producing enough to make me sick. I mean I had all of the most horrible neurotic symptoms, like migraine headaches and irregular periods and just total consumption with anxiety. At the same time when I'm trying to be intellectually sound and sophisticated! It was just such a waste of energy! It just detracts from every goal I might have to be successful and lucid and on top of it. I think it was probably a combination of society not giving credit and my own security, but I would probably stress the latter. But still, I mean we're insecure for reasons. I assumed before I went into my six hour oral examination, where there were five men, all of whom were, I thought, sophisticated scholars who spoke 10 languages and wrote 17, that I would fail - that I would never be what they are. I was completely unrealistic about it. Instead of assuming the best, I just assumed the worst. And assumed, I suppose, that it had a lot to do with my being female, and that I didn't have the male mind that I respected. Even though that's when my values, and those of the people I respect, those who were capable of being rational and historical and interpretive and dialectical all at the same time - for all the credit I had won, I just never believed that I had it, I guess. And I don't want to say to you that that's right, or that I am right, or that I don't have those talents. I still don't believe it in my heart. And when you don't believe it in your heart you just reproduce the same dilemma. You give yourself more and more reason to assume a girlie role - an emotional role, an irrational role, or less than perfect role. And I know I've played that game on myself. And that's what being a woman in academia has meant. No, that's what being a *successful* woman in academia has meant. Absolutely! In my feeling it's mandatory. And the corollory is that I am not sure that I would accept a woman who didn't. Which doesn't mean that it's right; I just think that's what I believe. Well actually, I don't think it's a male mind as much as it's a male way of thinking. It's only that because that's what we've seen. Men are supposed to be more rational and more intellectually objective and more easily spread themselves in the public view and world. It's not that I truthfully think that women can't and don't, but I was just being honest about where that was coming from. And I think if any of us are honest, we're willing to think that men are the thinkers, women are the feelers. And I'm not so much saying that as men are the thinkers and women are the doers. Which doesn't necessarily mean that I think one is better than the other or that the thinkers don't have a problem. Because I don't rely on them, right? I don't in the end, often take them seriously. Except that my profession has something to do with thinking, and there I'm willing to admit a contradiction. I haven't had a lot of good women models who are thinkers and who aren't impeded by their own anxiety and their own emotions and subjectivity and their own lower class stature in the academic community. Especially in mine. So the demand I make of myself is that I can do both. And I don't succeed. I'm not saying that I do.

That the conflict Marcela experiences between feeling and thinking is a problem to her, is validated by her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?."

> I regret most of all being, it seems to me, emotionally weak when it just was not called for. I always regret letting my anxieties show. But I also regret being so tied to making decisions that are so fucking rational all the time. I ponder every problem from its root to its conclusion so that I drive myself mad. I just resent my own weaknesses. I just really hate them; they've really gotten in the way. To intimacy, control. Intimacy and control.

The extent to which Marcela regrets that her belief in a body-mind dichotomy interferes with her daily functioning, is evidenced by her partial answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?." She explains that she values having control over her life - control which comes from gaining success and power, both in the academic world

and left-leaning community. Power, she explains, can mean power to communicate, power to choose, power to control her life circumstances, power to be financially secure, and power to be in control of herself. Adding that she is afraid that her emotions will take over, Marcela confirms that she perceives her feelings as needing control so that she can be rational, rather than as information she can use in making rational decisions.

> Secondly, success and power, and they're sort of intermarried. They mean having control over my life. Intimacy and control, those are the important things. It's kind of a version of the double bind I was just talking about. If you don't have success and power, you don't reproduce it, if you don't reproduce it, you can't be comfortable, you can't do away with the anxiety that impedes you. So it's a vicious circle. And I think that I don't want to reproduce anxiety; I want to make sure that it's at a minimum. To be successful I have to be very good at what I do professionally, which is in the balance right now. I want to keep my feet in two pies: the first one being academia, and the second being this new job which you might call, well, it's communication and it's kind of popularizing all of the knowledge and abilities and skills I've accumulated to now. So I continue to do research and to write more than I ever have done before, and publish consistently, and that makes me feel valuable. And able! And it makes me feel like I'm in touch with a wider left-leaning, pseudo-academic community in this country, and in Europe. And the other thing, if I'm going to do communications properly, I have to learn how to successfully and confidently communicate ideas to a new public, to a new audience. The first I think I have accomplished and I have no anxiety about and the second I haven't. Then there's power - power over my life and over the circumstances which can control my life. I want never to be poor again; I don't want to live on the edge. And I want to have power so that I am again more emotionally stable, so I'm happier, so I'm more comfortable. That means financial security. And that means power over my social relationships, being more choosy about who my friends are - both acquaintances and intimate friends. Power to choose! If you have success and power, then you, I think, can competently achieve control over yourself and over the circumstances and the people who could control you. I don't want my supervisor to control me anymore. I don't want his image and his abilities standing in front of me, like the Rock of Gibraltar that I have to conquer. Which means I don't put him there, first of all. That is essentially self-control. Self-control means learning how to cope with success and anxiety realistically, which is something I have never achieved. It means holding your heart and your head in the balance so that neither one nor the other takes over to the detriment of the others - to the detriment of your happiness, of your ability to cope. I am really afraid that my emotions will take me over for awhile. And though I am trying to explore them, I wouldn't want them to determine my life and my lifestyle, or my decisions. So I value intimacy, success, power and control, in which I have sort of variations on the same theme.

The issue of control comes up again, establishing its importance to Marcela. Asked, "In what ways do you experience yourself as being powerful?" she states that she feels powerful when she is in control of her life. She explains that having routine and order in her daily life (this includes a stable, monogamous relationship), and having the respect of her colleagues, results in emotional control and self-respect, which ultimately result in a

sense of being powerful.

> It just means being in control of my life. And I've never really felt flaunted or denied, so my standards keep improving instead of decreasing. Powerful means being comfortable with the friends I have chosen to be intimate with. And it means, well, to date it has never meant having financial security but I'm totally irresponsible about money. It does mean establishing order which can include material stability too. Just order! Just routine! That's really power. And routine comes in play in every facet of one's life. So it means being in control of my emotional life, hopefully, now. It means having, oh yes, I like nice, stable, tidy, monogamous relationships, so it means having that and being happy with it, not being afraid of it, not running away from it. It means having respect from those from whom it counts, which means my sisters, my political allies, my mentors in academia and in whichever profession I find myself, which right now is communications with the union. It means having the respect of people in leadership positions in that workspace now. And I hate myself when I don't have respect. That goes back to that thing about approval, which I don't think is particularly legitimate. Because first of all I know I have to respect myself and that everything will fall into place. So that's what it means. Power means self-respect! And that's when you feel powerful? I feel a false sense of power when I emotionally control other human beings. I don't really like that, and that doesn't last and it's not real. You know, men and women tend to fall in love with you or emulate you or imitate you. Being powerful really is emotional control.

Conversely, Marcela feels powerless when she is inhibited from acting on her thoughts because she has lost emotional control – when her anxieties prevent her from making decisions or being active. She equates passivity with death. The issue of control emerges again. Marcela feels powerless in her family, 'where emotions are so raw and so undisciplined', and in particular situations where she has no control. Asked, "In what ways do you experience yourself as being powerless?" she responded:

> Powerless is not having emotional control and for me that means not being able to act on my thoughts. Not being able to act in the face of what seems an insurmountable public pressure. This doesn't often happen in my personal life, in my private life. It happens in public situations when I fall apart, when I let myself go over to my weaknesses, and my vulnerability – that is, my anxiety – such that I don't make decisions, I can't participate in important decision-making processes when there are groups involved. For example, a meeting about the campaign for equality of women. There were only three of us, and two of them are men and they have been in the union for 10, 12, 20 years, and I have been in for two days. And on the one hand I want to invalidate their experience because I'm a woman and I know what's best. And on the other hand, of course, I don't believe that or I'd be able to participate freely. But I can't because I feel that my experience is so limited in terms of the union business and in terms of politicking in the union, that I will say the wrong thing. So I end up saying nothing, or I end up being consumed with anxiety. Which is passive, passive, passive! Death! And it just really takes away from self-respect and self-esteem, instead of building on it. That's one of the times I create the conditions of my own unhappiness, and I'm convinced almost willfully, so that I don't have to be responsible for my errors.
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> Other than that I feel powerless only in family, I think. In professional situations like the one I described, and in family, where emotions are so raw and so undisciplined that there's no hope for constructive action. And at borders! And around policemen! And occasionally beautiful men and women, but very occasionally. Because I mean if they were beautiful they also have

> to be really brilliant and have to emulate all those principles I talked about much earlier. I mean occasionally that can happen. I know a lot of people are subject to it. I don't think that I am as subject to it as I used to be, but occasionally you can feel powerless in the wake of a memorable human being. But that's not so upsetting – it can be pleasant.

That Marcela values in her life ideals which could be seen to be dichotomous, sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementary, is a pattern also reflected in her valuing of herself. Asked, "What do you value about yourself?" she explained that she values that she is well-rounded – that she can be both intelligent and emotionally honest, both professional and domestic, both a thinker and a doer. That she is comfortable with her physical self and that she has a solid integrity means to her that she is trustworthy and can successfully communicate to others.

> What I value about myself? I like myself because I think I have the potential to be a well-rounded person. I really think I can be a lot, at the same time and at different times. And those are, I realize now, the kinds of people I like. People who are emotionally honest at the same time as especially and incredibly bright. And women and men who like the way they look and who are comfortable with their physical presence. And I like that about myself. I think I'm attractive and I like myself. Being comfortable with my physical presence – well, it means first of all that you have a new instrument with which you can communicate with other people. New if you haven't used it before. I mean demeanours and poise and a certain, I say elegance, but I don't mean it in its old fashioned way. I just mean your relationship to yourself is the first thing that people notice, and if it's favorable then you have an easy in on a person. You can establish trust right away. And trust brings meaning and all those other corny old fashioned things that I thought about a long time ago, which are still relevant. And I like my ability to be as domestic as I can be at the same time as I can be very, well, just professional, you know? And capable! Not that I like one or the other. I like the fact that I can do and be both. To me that means that I can achieve the best of two worlds. Of home and community. Of intimacy or the source of intimacy, at the same time as I can prepare myself by being a participant in the world outside. So being well-rounded means for me, well, first of all that I am relatively at home with myself. Secondly, that I am capable of being professional, and capable without denying sensitivity or those other things that go along with being a woman, including vulnerability at times. And thirdly, that I have an integrity that comes of my character in and of itself. My character isn't something that I continue to create, make-up, build on, but it has a solid foundation. And that it's authentic and that it's relatively natural and, not withstanding changes which happen all the time of course, that there's a core that is relatively solid and which anyone who comes in my purview can trust. And that I can be both domestic and professional is an example, I think, of being what I consider for myself well-rounded. I can do anything in a home, which I'm sure you can do too. I know how to fix things and I'm a pack rat and I save everything and I'm cheap at the same time as I'm incredibly, what's the opposite of cheap? When I really like something I just throw money away. I can fix anything, not just because I am capable of fixing it but because I've thought ahead for 10 years to collect everything you need to repair or put together. That's a virtue! My friends have to come to me to collect tools and learn how to do things. And I like that about myself, because most academics don't know how to do it. They can't function when something breaks; they also can't function in normal, social environments. And I think I can and I like that. I can talk to immigrants and ordinary people as well as I can talk to my supervisor. So my being able to be both domestic and professional means that that's the way I have to be. It's the goal in my life. It means that you

> think about valuable human experience. And, well, I guess it's a moot point and I'm overdoing it.

Elaborating on the issue of being comfortable with her physical self, Marcela explains that she is comfortable with being female, with her 'womanness'. She explains that she does not trust women who are not comfortable being women, women who are not feminists, or women who reject men in general.

> I think that I'm quite comfortable with my womanhood. I like women who are, too. It gives them an elegance that I really, really admire, and feel close to, and trust. This is pretty simplistic and I'm not being very sophisticated now, so don't – why am I excusing myself? I neither trust the woman who is not a feminist and who is womanly, or the woman who is a feminist and isn't. I shouldn't say womanly – who doesn't feel comfortable with being what it is to be a woman. That is, everything it isn't to be a man, whether that's sexual or intellectual or emotional. And whether it's contradictory or not contradictory. So my ideal is a woman who has grown through a feminist period or who considers herself a feminist, and yet is at ease with whatever is feminine about her. Even if a lot of that isn't what she'd like to be. Women who reject, a priori, men or maleness, or every sexist word that one encounters in everyday life, I don't trust. Not because they're not eminently trustworthy, but largely because I don't trust their ability to make judgements that I respect. I mean, sure, we all make mistakes and I think I'm open to errors and all that, but the women I choose for my intimates are, I think, women who are sophisticated women at the same time as they're comfortable with being feminine, or its reverse, as long as it's authentic.

In keeping with the pattern of valuing her seemingly dichotomous attributes, Marcela values that she can be clever and witty, and fun and flirtatious, and at the same time is principled in her attitudes and behaviour.

> I think that I really admire the way my mind works sometimes, now. And I don't think it's particularly normal, and it's not particularly admirable either. It's, well, it's just got character and I didn't think it used to. I like people with wit and I like people who like to have fun, and I think that when I'm comfortable with myself I have wit and I have fun. And because I have wit and I have fun, others can feel like having it too. I like quick-witted people. I like people who are clever and yet not necessarily pretentious. Easy when it's called for and not easy when it's not, and that means a certain discrimination, at the same time as it means a certain, just an ability I think to use logic in a constructive way. I think sometimes I am logical to ad nauseum in a way that doesn't benefit anyone, especially me. But if you use logic lightly – if you use it in your everyday experience, you mix it up with fun and wit and just light interpersonal relationships. You get fun, creative fun. And I like my ability to do that.
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> And I like my ability at 30 years of age to be and feel the same way I did when I was 19. I'm not embarrassed by my youthfulness or my flirtatiousness or my coquettishness. All those things that my father weaned me on, encouraged me to be before I was 13. That, I think, has to do with wit and fun making, and cleverness and being cute, coy – a Shirley Temple-like girl. I think he encouraged that part of me and I'm glad that I haven't lost it all, although under the pressure of the Women's Movement it has not surfaced on many occasions. 'I'm sorry, I'm guilty, I'm guilty, I'm coy, I'm cute, I'm clever and I'll stop right now.' But I'm learning to like it. And I like it about other women, you know? My favorite women friends are really silly. I mean atrociously embarrassingly silly. At the same time they can be sophisticated, elegant women running entire conferences and national tours and great academic feats, and organizing the Women's Movement from here

> to Timbuktu, and they can still be silly and foolish.
> Those are all character things, but I'm sure that it would be dishonest to say that they weren't informed by a set of principles. And I really value my ability to be consistent about them over the years. When I talk about principles, I have meant political principles but more specifically just those that I have thought about, that I have reasoned and that I have made every effort to live out. I think, however, that the curse of the intelligent woman is to do that without a sense of humor, or to dismiss perfectly valuable human beings because, 'I am more principled than they are.' And that has been my curse, too, occasionally, so I don't want to go too far with it. But on the other hand, I have things that are consistent about my principles and that's to my credit. So to me that means that I'm a valuable person. It means, essentially, that I know the route to my own happiness. Not just a valuable person just for the sake of being a valuable person, it means that that's what it takes for me to be happy, to be valuable. To be valuable means having these unnecessarily complicated principles about how one should live one's life. I think that I actually don't require that anyone have a particular dogma, but I do require that people think about the world and their place in it. And I think that a political principle is simply a cognitive, reflective attitude toward events and establishing your position toward them. From my point of view it's a relatively left-leaning politic, which includes the liberation of women and other minorities. And I work toward that, most every week of my life.

That her life is principled and her activities are consistent with her beliefs, is evidenced by Marcela's partial answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?." She explains that her social life involves cultural activities which overlap and are integrated with her academic pursuits and political actions.

> I also value a cultural life, which means, for me, an involvement in valuable social and cultural circles. But that's, I mean everybody has something they do with their time, and that's what I do with mine. For me it means the Left. For me it means not being in Edmonton, not spending a lot of time here, and it means trying to be as close to the pulse of the world's cultural development as I can be, keeping on top of creative movements in the countries which I have chosen to study. I'm here in Edmonton because of this job which I just thought was too good to pass up. And even if I don't see it as temporary, I see one of the ways in which I will keep control, is by allowing myself to take holidays, saving money and time so that I can go to those cities which I like being in - Montreal, Toronto, New York, Prague - the cities that I like, that I need. I really think those are all the things I value.

Being principled in her behaviour can be difficult for Marcela, however. In answer to the question, "What do you dislike about yourself?," she explains that being principled means being disciplined. When she is anxious, feels emotionally vulnerable or lacking in confidence, she becomes undisciplined and cannot achieve. She judges herself (and other women) as weak and hateful at these times.

> What makes principles and makes a person adhere to principles, also what makes a person successful, is something called discipline. And I have the pretense of being neurotic about self-discipline, and it's not always true. Often I fill my time, especially when I'm nervous about not being disciplined enough, with busy work. And I'm not that disciplined at all. However, when I am authentically undisciplined I get angry with myself. If I'm slovenly or lazy or when I have worked an eight hour day, supposedly, and have frittered it away somehow. You know, you're there and you're at your seat or your desk, and you haven't really accomplished what you should. I get angry with

> myself when I am emotionally weak. Not mostly, half and half. Half when I haven't accomplished the work I should have done and have no reasonable excuse for not accomplishing it. And the other half is being impeded for whatever reason – socially, or in work, professionally or politically, because I am emotionally weak, because I am thinking too much of my self image and my self confidence, and not just being. So when I am undisciplined, to me it means that I am weak, and I am not living to my greatest capacity. I'm creating the conditions for my own unhappiness. When I'm sane I know that, and when I'm not sane I don't know it. And I don't seem to be able to let go of weaknesses. I don't let go of anxiety when I should, when there's no point to it. When I'm anxious, again it means that I can't achieve as easily or as proficiently as I should do. And there it's especially cantankerous because it's what women do. That's why I hate them and why we hate ourselves and why we shouldn't be doing it. And I just create this condition for that to continue.

Being hampered by her health (specifically by dysmenorrhea and migraine headaches) is also something Marcela dislikes about herself. She takes responsibility for these difficulties, believing that she can avoid them if she is disciplined about her health (meaning that she is in control). That she experiences these difficulties means to her that she is weak.

> I don't really think there's anything serious that I dislike about myself. Oh, the physical thing is important. Sometimes I dislike myself for not being as disciplined about my health, about carrying on my usual regime of physical activities. Along with that goes things like being vulnerable to illness. It took me 26 years to get over incredible dysmenorrhea, or whatever it's called. Severe cramps so that you can't work during periods. And I get angry when I let that happen to me again. I get angry when I get migraine headaches. Which I get far less frequently than I did when I was married, but I still get them. I hate myself for it because I really do think I'm healthy and if I'm sane and in control I don't have to have them. When I do, it means that I'm weak and I'm not taking care and I'm not thinking ahead.

Above, in her discussion of her principles, Marcela explained that she works constantly for the liberation of women and other minorities. Asked, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?" she explained first that it has meant everything to her personally in terms of her pursuing an academic career and developing close relationships with women. Politically, she remains committed to the movement and to taking political action to mobilize women. However, she is disturbed by the kinds of nonsupportive incidents she has witnessed and experienced within the feminist community. She sees a need for leaders in the Women's Movement, who can work politically without letting personal issues interfere with their work.

> Oh my God! Well, what I think of the Women's Movement is twofold. Personally it meant everything to my own ability to proceed with my career choices. And it meant everything to my ability to achieve intimacy and happiness with women, which I told you was a great disappointment in my earlier life. Politically, I'm not sure that you need to ask a socialist what she thinks of the Women's Movement. But politically speaking, I think that it's a movement which, to use one of Trotsky's favorite lines, is marked by uneven development. I think now anyways, for myself, it's something I continue to

> contribute to but not as personally or as intimately as I used to. I now feel that in some ways it's a movement that needs to be built on from a perspective which isn't just feminist. And it disappoints me when I see, as I do see in Edmonton all the time, women not supporting each other and calling themselves feminists and trying to be a part of a movement which has similar goals, and still playing the same old games. I am personally hurt by that and often even impeded in my own actions. So I try to keep a certain distance on how socially involved I get in the Women's Movement. Which doesn't mean that I have – I mean I still think I have the greatest political commitment to it. But I think being unnecessarily critical of women's personal lives – the morals and the mores that feminists came up with in the early 70's especially, are in a lot of ways bankrupt and decrepit and stultifying to the Movement. When I talk about those mores I mean especially those which discredit women who are feminine, or at some points in the movement, women who like men or sleep with men or sleep around with men, or women who share the men or man, whatever. A lot of the stuff that bothers me the most has to do with the way they talk to, treat and speak about men in their own lives. Which invalidates their commitment in my mind. And so I think I still have a certain reserve with certain kinds of feminists, although I encourage it totally, even in its worst moments. I have a reserve because I need to emotionally. The rest of it has more to do with how feminism fits into socialism. And into the wider political goals I have, about which I have no reservations. So for me the Women's Movement means building political actions which on the other hand, socially and personally, involve and mobilize women in groups. On the other hand, I try in some small measure to now keep away from the more personal issues, like consciousness-raising which I have grown to distrust. And like therapeutic groups when there aren't women there who are, I don't want this to sound pompous, I want to say professional, I just mean women who are trained, who know what they're doing. And I think that kind of experience builds leaders and I think that's what the Women's Movement needs. Leaders who are already just comfortable with themselves so that the petty personal stuff that we are still all consumed with does not get into the way of making the more important political points. Because only they, in fact, keep that Movement going, no matter what anybody says. It's still the more sophisticated political group of women, and in some cases men, who build on the process, keep improving on it.

Marcela explains further a particular concern she has for women's vulnerability as sexual objects in the eyes of men who at the same time have greater power than women.

> Another component of understanding what womanhood means to me is the terror of knowing all women are vulnerable and that their vulnerability reduces their chances to achieve self-fulfillment. And I believe I have some responsibility for changing that. At the present time working women are kept in their place by actual sexist bargaining practices, i.e., maternity leave. And worse than that, labor controls mechanisms that depend on vulnerability and reproduce it, i.e., sexual harassment. I've seen strong, independent, single women psychologically terrorized at the work site by male co-workers and supervisors. I've counselled women who've been sexually assaulted on the job. The consequences of sexual harassment for individual women is devastating, both psychologically and finanacially, but it's a guarantee (and this is where the terror is for me) that women will be kept in their place as a reservoir of labor with little individual exceptions here and there.

Asked, "What do you think about the saying 'It's a man's world'?," Marcela stated that this is an historical truth – that men have been making the political and economic decisions, both nationally and internationally, for '4000 centuries'. She is not defeated by this fact, however, believing that women must become active in changing the world and in creating

small communities, based on feminist and socialist ideals, in which to live and work. She perceives this as a challenge and is committed to being actively involved in affecting political change.

> I don't really know that there's very much to say about it, except it's the way things are. But that's no excuse for inactivity, especially by women. I just think that there's really no debate. It is really the way things are. And this is simply historical truth. Everybody knows that important decisions, international, national, political, economic and everything else, are decided by men and have been for approximately 4000 centuries, which means that we live in a world where the foundations have been rather firmly established. But what's important to me is what you do with it. And if you have any brains or principles you accept and move on. Make a little women's world! I mean given that that's the way things are, I still think that it gives us an incredible challenge to be and do things that are different. And I certainly think that the woman worth her salt learns how to function in that world, and more importantly create some new ones, which can't be on a world scale, and which has to have everything to do with intimacy and communities. And, of course, with the Left in Canada as a natural consequence. Women should create a new world. Not they *should*. If you have any commitment to a version of social transformation, then you of course decide the route which you will take. And if you're a feminist and a socialist you of course have certain solutions which are not the norm. And that's very hard work – to live in a world which is dominated by men, and yet at the same time to retain your self image and your strength in order to battle for something better. Realistically speaking, the only place in which I think women and men can create a new world that is not dominated by men, is in small groups. In small communities. And if you have a political commitment, you create a political community which has an ideology which favors that world view.

K. Denise

Denise is a 64 year old woman of French heritage, born and raised in rural Alberta, who has lived in Edmonton for the past 40 years. Her mother (who died in 1974) was a self-educated woman with formal education to grade 10, who worked as a homemaker. Her father (who died in 1967) had grade eight formal education and was also self-educated, who worked as a farmer and a railroad engineer. Denise was the sixth child in a family of 10 children. She obtained a high school education and later secretarial training. Now retired exclusively to homemaking, she previously worked three years as a factory seamstress, 11 years as a cashier and cashier trainer, and 14 years as a secretary. Denise was married at age 24, widowed at age 31, and remarried at age 40. She lives with her husband of 24 years. She has two sons (one from each marriage) ages 33 and 23, and two grand-daughters.

Asked, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?", Denise begins with the comment that she has always been very contented to be a woman. She then briefly describes the differences she has perceived between the women and men she worked with, adding that she has always got along fine with women. Explaining that her children are central to her life, that she appreciates their love and respect, and that she feels satisfied knowing she has helped others, she maintains that a woman's life is more fulfulling than a man's.

> Well, for myself I've always been very contented as a woman. Very contented! I've had no - well, I've just loved my life as a woman. I have found that working between men and women, that you will get more of an equal keel with men than with women, in the sense that many of them dislike each other, in the sense that they are jealous of one another sometimes. If one gets an advance within an office the other one doesn't like it. Well, men are the same too, but they don't show it as much, not as emotionally. And I've worked very well with both men and women though. I've always gotten along fine with women. And being a woman has been very fulfilling. Very fulfilling! Because I took my role in life and just made a contentment of my life by finding objective things to do and helping people. And my children were the greatest highlight of my life, of course. When I had my children and they were small, they were my whole life, because working with them and watching them grow and being busy with them, really, I never thought of going out to work when they were very little because I preferred to be with them at home. But when things got that we needed extra money and they were old enough to go to school, I took part-time work and enjoyed it. It's been very fulfilling. I wouldn't change with a man. I wouldn't want a man's life. I think a woman's life is a very rich life. I feel that I've given a lot of happiness and health to some, to quite a few people who have come and asked for help, or have been lucky to have been able to say the right thing at the right time through instinct or whatever. And I have been told that it gave them a lot of satisfaction or comfort. Quite simply, I have just quite a happy, normal life. I haven't achieved or probably changed the world, but I'm glad

> that I've helped a few people. My children are very good to me and they respect me and they love me as their mother and are proud of me, that I was as I am, and they think it was good. Nothing fantastic about it, just a pretty happy, normal life.

Denise explains how she has affected change in other's lives by quietly setting an example. She noticed, working as a secretary in a school, that male teachers had some difficulty understanding the children and that she was able to change some of these teachers' attitudes toward the children over time.

> I think that you can change many things without people even knowing that you are changing their views or opinions, if you go about it the right way. You can get across a lot of things by doing it in the right manner, if you know what I mean. Not pushing your opinion over, but working quietly and very nicely and showing an outcome of the situation. Whereas instead of forcing your opinion, you can gradually change a person to maybe better thinking and everything. By doing it yourself. Though you can't try that on anyone and then turn around and go out and do the opposite the next week. You have to live that life - a good, solid life and show that you're content as a person, as that person. Like by showing that you are satisfied with yourself and can have a humorous attitude towards a certain situation. Like I notice at work sometimes some of the teachers would be very, very upset over certain situations with students or something, and yet I could see the humor in what the student had done because of his age, because of his attitude or whatever. And it wasn't near as serious as the male teacher - it might be a male teacher, mostly it was males who got the most upset with the children, which is, you can understand too, because I think women have more of an understanding of children. They're closer to them and see more of them in a home situation. But if you had kind of a humorous side to it and show that it didn't bother you, that that wasn't that serious, you could turn it into a bit of humor and it appeased the situation. I did that kind of thing constantly. Constantly! But they didn't know that I was doing it. Because it would come in proof, in action, in meaningful ways of talking to that person, or getting friendly with that particular student and getting to know more about that student and finding out how he really felt and why he felt that way, why he had done that certain action in school, without the student even knowing. The student wouldn't even know. It might take a period of two or three weeks to get to that point with the student and then when you could tell the teacher, 'Well, you would have probably done this on that day if you had come from home under that and gone straight to school.' I was there 14 years of course. It wasn't done in an hour or a day, but it changed their attitude over a long period of time. And I wasn't saying, 'I'm going to try this experiment with this student.' It was just very natural and very friendly and getting to know that student and see just who they liked and disliked and why. It came quite naturally to me through love for my children. And if I found that a student bothered me and really got on my nerves, I made a specific point of speaking to that student, making him come up to me and asking him questions like, 'Do you like hockey?' or 'What's your favorite sport?' or 'Do you like movies?' or 'What did you do over the weekend?' I would make myself get friendly with him or her and then after awhile you found out that there was a very nice person inside there. I don't find that men do that so much. Some of them do but not quite in the same way. They might do it but not quite in the same way as a person who really likes the student or the child. They'll do it because they have to do it. It's their job and they just want to be able to be on a one-to-one basis with their student in the classroom. So for their own sake they get across the barrier. Not through liking that person, but having to like them. I found that anyway.

Being able to affect change in others' behavior by her own example is perceived by

Denise as a particular kind of power. In answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?", she talks about her power to influence others, giving another example.

> You have the power to change things as an individual by example I guess, over a certain length of time. If you know that something is right, there should be a certain way to make it better either in the world or the field you're in or something. And you do it daily as proof that that's the right way to do it, until it's noticed that that is really working out. The way that person is doing it really makes a lot of sense and it certainly improves things. If you repeat it often enough and if you're consistent and if you show the person long enough that that's good, why you have the power then to influence those people in finally realizing and seeing for themselves that this is the better way. And in politics I would say the power to change things - many of them are in power. As for me, I think about a certain person and I'm beginning to help this person now. She's a young woman and she turns to alcohol a little too often and everything. I feel that I have the power to change her without opening my mouth. And when she comes into my home or I go into her home, by completely refusing to drink with her. And have coffee and show her the clear head, the clear mind, the clear thinking, as opposed to her being impaired and not thinking very straight sometimes. It is beginning to work. I have this power in a sense, over her, because she wants to be not like me but be able to have a clear head once in awhile. And really, when she says something one day, it remains the same the next day, rather than giving not a very good opinion one day and then giving a good opinion the next day. She now has become wanting to be stable all the time, and is beginning to look at this and really starting to think about it. That's the way to go. You should really be in control of your own self. And each person certainly has the power to do that and to work with it. And in that way I have the power to show her that she's going the wrong way, by not saying anything. She can judge by what I'm doing that that's really good, and she's beginning to think of changing. I don't know if that's considered power. But that's one situation.

With regard to being a mother and feeling satisfied with this role, Denise explains that she thinks she naturally loved children. She has been surprised to see that some mothers do not. She comments on the importance of providing good homes for children and questions the trend of mothers putting their children into day care centers or nursery schools, or leaving them with babysitters. Emphasizing the necessity to give children a good foundation, she believes caring for small children is a full-time career.

> I think it came very natural to me to love children. I always did love children. And I think that I have found in a few instances through acquaintances that I would be very, very surprised to find that some mothers do not love their children as much as others. They just, they love them but not in the same capacity as I myself did. I guess that's just the way certain people are. They loved as much as they could love I guess. For me it's always been there, from the time I'd see a baby in a cradle and thought to myself - there is an old saying: 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.' And if you started from that moment with little children, not going out and making a point of overpowering the person's life but through love and everything, and being there and setting them straight on all these different little things. You begin right in the home. You get enough homes properly rooted, properly founded, and the people that go out from that home and into the world, hopefully will put that good back out into the world in a meaningful way. But

my way may not be your way or the neighbor's way. No. But still, if each does their best instead of shunning them into day care centers and nursery schools. You just don't know the person that's overseeing your children and maybe the idea that's going into that child's mind. And as an adult they will sooner or later transpose that back into the world at some instant. So I really believe that through the home and a good home and a good foundation, that you're going to get some pretty outstanding people. Which I think we do have. Many, many beautiful homes. But some people give up a little too easy sometimes I think. They find it all too much trouble and they go find a babysitter and go to work. It's a trend. And you know, the child notices that. Of course you see for me that was satisfactory, whereas for another person that just isn't what they wanted. Whether the trend came across the news media or what other people were doing, and it made them unhappy to see someone else doing something they weren't doing, and suddenly they thought, 'My life just isn't very rich or fulfilling.' But if only they would think to themselves that being a mother is a really beautiful and full-time career. And you're usually finished by the time your children are 15 or 16. You're still just 40, which is a very young age, and if you feel like you want to further your career, you're at the height of your potential at 40. I think. I really do. I've seen some very good mothers and some not so good. Like the way they spoke in front of their children, the way that I'm sure the child must have felt that they were not loved just by making the mistake of speaking too quickly, too much in temper and not turning around and correcting it instantly to the child - 'Oh, it wasn't your fault that I got this upset. This happened and it had nothing to do with you.' They're so taken up with themselves and their feelings that they just - the child is left there wondering and they didn't clarify that that child is still loved. And I've often thought, 'Oh, my goodness! I would never have done that.' Because I feel that with almost any child of any age you should not, or try not to do anything to a child that you would not do to your own personal adult friend. You shouldn't just do something like taking something away from them without asking them, 'Can I share this with you?' or 'Should we put this away?' Just take it and that's it and fling it! They feel it very, very deeply and they re-enter it into their friend's lives or teacher's later on in life. It's a big job. It's a big job and it's a constant job and you make mistakes, but if you notice it you certainly correct it. I think that through the small children is where you're going to begin to change things into how to treat people. I feel like anybody should know that. I mean how I was brought up by my mother and father.
Nowadays, a child can come home from school, crying their eyes out, and have a very bad day and come in and open their own door and they have no one there to take that and explain the pain away. They go back the next day and they are apt to give out a little bit of that pain. Sometimes, unless you really, really need the extra money, I think that - I'm not saying the woman should be around the kitchen and doing dishes and washing floors all of the rest of her life. But I do think that for the first few years, as small children growing up, a great deal of influence can be given that they'll use for the rest of their lives.

On the other hand, Denise recognizes the need for mothers to have a break from their children and to get out of the house. She recognizes that being isolated in their homes can be a depressing situation for many women. Denise explains how she felt it was important to be with her children when they were small and that she found babysitters to be an unsatisfactory substitute. She has not regretted that as a woman she was expected to be home with her children, seeing this job as an important one.

> But I think a mother needs an output too, out of the house and refresh herself. She cannot be there 24 hours around the clock and never get a break or she won't be any good. I wouldn't have gone out and left my children with babysitters because I don't know what they might do. I just sacrificed and did everything I could to be with them until they were six and started school. I had seen a few babysitters in the district and I thought, 'Well, there's no way I want my small children to see this and not be there to explain to them right then and there – straighten them out.' Because they puzzle over things, children do. Things really do bother them when they're little. They want an explanation. Well, to the best of my ability I'll explain it to them. And I didn't want to leave them with strangers. Sometimes you think you know a person, but you bring then into your home to babysit your children and they just are not what you really want. And then it's too late. But after they went to school I definitely would take work, especially in evening, work in an office for a couple of hours or something. Because I felt I needed it. I'm a great believer that a mother does need to get out. Because it's very refreshing to mix with other people, to get other people's opinion and see what other people think. Because you can get entrenched in your own and you can be wrong and think you're right. Or take a lot more of the situations – get blue at home and feeling downhearted and everything and think you're the only one. Well, there's thousands of others out there just like you. And you feel refreshed when you come back home and find that you're not alone at all in your situation. It's not a unique situation at all. There are thousands of others. But I have never regretted that I was the woman and that was my role – that I would be home more than my husband. I've never regretted that. I've been content and felt that it was a very important part of my life to do. I think! Everybody to their own opinion. I'm not an opinionated person, but I feel that trying to change the whole world on a broad basis is not as easy as changing one small section of it, like within the home. And then once you've changed that, the person that becomes an adult will certainly change a little bit, even if it's not change, but fit into the world in his own way and give an example. Now my parents' and other people's standards may not be the same. It just might be no good for some people. Some people have a different outlook.

That being loved and respected by her children is important to Denise is validated by her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?". She explains that she values her children's love and respect because it means to her she is deserving of it, that she earned it, that she has accomplished something and that she is being rewarded for fulfilling her obligations and doing a satisfactory job.

> And in my life I would value uppermost, because I'm married and I have children, I value the respect and love of my children.
> I feel that being that I have the love and respect of my children, I must have earned it. I must be deserving of it so that I must have put enough input into them and into my situation as a woman and mother. That has given them the value to respect me rather than not, which is rewarding. And that somewhere along the way I didn't fail them. They could just as well like to be 100 miles away from me and never see me. Then I would have to wonder, 'What had I done to my own children, which were my greatest responsibility?' So to have the love and respect of my children is a rewarding feeling, that I must have fulfilled that part of my life in a satisfactory manner and fulfilled what you call obligations. I enjoyed doing it, and it's rewarding that I didn't fail it completely anyway. Which I could have, through bad luck or not knowing any better. I thank the good Lord or whatever, that I had the insight and the courage and the health and whatever, to put enough into it that I am being rewarded. And it is a warm feeling. It's knowing that at least whatever their life is like, I've helped to make it a good life, not a life that they won't even like themselves and be miserable people out in the world and not function

socially. Like I've given that to my children. That's rewarding and I feel that the efforts, which were not always easy, I've accomplished that, I hope, properly.

Denise discusses her own family background. She explains that it was instilled in her by her father especially, that she was as capable as her brothers and as deserving of respect. She felt prepared to be an honest worker in the world and she expected to be treated fairly.

There was 10 of us and there were six brothers and four sisters, and we were taught to respect one another. My brothers couldn't come up to one of us and push us around or anything. My dad would intervene immediately and make the brothers understand that the sisters were just as important, their opinion was important, what they wanted was important, and they were not allowed to do that. We had to respect our brothers. Now they could do certain things because they were men and boys that dad wouldn't allow us to do because – that dates back quite awhile. Say driving a car or something at the beginning. Well, that was the brothers' thing to do. But when we got to be about 18, Dad taught us to drive the car too. He decided that maybe we'd need to drive a car someday and need to help ourselves at a certain age. I would say it came from my mother and father. So I never got the feeling that I was less important. No. Not in my home. And I really never got it, I suppose, because it was instilled in me that I was just as capable as any person. If I went out in the world to work and everything, that number one was to be honest to the people and company I worked for. But if at any time that encroached into morality where they would ask you maybe to cheat or like cashiering or something, to get a little bit more for the company or something, if ever that was, we were to stand right up and say, 'No, that's not honest. I refuse to do that.' But to give an honest day's work for an honest pay. But by the same token, not to do half a day's work and expect a full day's pay and skirt around the job if you could get away with it. That was instilled in us.

My dad told us that we could accomplish just as much as any of the boys. Not necessarily that they do better than us in whatever field we were in, if we worked to our capability. It was so ongoing from the time we were small children that it was always sort of with us. There were so many examples across the years. There was one incident – I don't know if it would tie in with it. Probably this might have been one incident where one brother – when he played he was a little rough. I was fairly stout as a child and my other sister was small and more slight. So if he would have wanted to show his boyish strength or anything and start playing tag or anything – well, he got a little too rough one day. He really hurt me and in the final end he punched me or slapped me very hard – I think it was right on the muscle of the arm – and it really hurt. I cried because he was so much stronger than I was, being a boy – we were about 12 or 13 there – and I wanted to get back at him. He had had a story going on in the paper that was coming through the mail, a weekly series, and he was saving them. And I went out and tore it in half. He was absolutely furious and brought it down and showed it to my parents. And my dad said, 'Well, I'm sorry. She couldn't punch you out but she had a right to straighten out the hurt that you gave her by punching her, so that was her way of getting back at you. She didn't hurt you physically but she made you feel hurt too. You'll just have to not do this again to your sister. And she probably will never tear up anything you're reading again.' And that was that! He said, 'Just don't use your fists to strike one of your sisters, and laugh about it.' That was one incident where neither of us were punished. But he didn't tell me that I had done right either, but he said, 'She didn't do right by tearing your paper but it was her only way of getting her hurt out against you.' So he tried to straighten out; my brother never did anything like that again. It was an equal fairness. You couldn't go out and say anything against each other or fight things. Name calling was not allowed. We each had a

> name and they just didn't call you fatso or tubby or anything. You had a name and you used it. But my dad was a very – I think he was way ahead of his time. My dad was very wise. He was away ahead of his time. He was on a farm and everything. He could see this future coming where we would have to live in this world as women and our brothers would be out as men, but that we had to be just as important as they were when we went out into that world. And we were prepared. And there would be many instances where we might be tried to be taken advantage of, but not to let it happen. Not to let it happen! That was one section of his life I often think of now that I'm older, looking back on my father.

As she begins talking about her mother we see a conflict in Denise's perception of what a mother is ideally, compared to her experienced reality. She begins by stating that her mother, like all mothers, was a great appeaser, a peace–maker. As she continues, it becomes clear that this was not really the case. Rather, Denise experienced her mother as more sympathetic to her brothers than to herself, from which she concludes that mothers are closer to their sons. She understands now that her mother was often exhausted from bearing and caring for a family of 10 children, and that as a result she had less patience with her children than did their father.

> And my mother was a great appeaser. She was kind of inbetween. Well, they say that the mothers can be the peace–makers. And if fathers are too stern the mother is said to be the appeaser and she will take away many hurts. Which was the case a lot in those days. The mother was always there when appeasement was needed.
> My mother was not always a peacemaker though. Because there were times when I felt that a mother – I found in probably a lot of times that unconsciously a mother will be very much closer to her sons than her daughters. She won't let anything get out of hand to where the boys rule the girls or anything like that. But she will sometimes let something go that could be maybe – 'Oh, forget it! Your brother didn't mean it. And quit your crying!' And go on to whatever she had to do, from fatigue, from whatever, because it was one of the boys. No, that's one thing I really had to work at because I found many times it wasn't so much my mother that was the peace–maker. Me, I almost had to at that point, take it and forget it. And I thought, 'If I ever grow up, I'll just show that brother of mine.' Just do it on my own, because I felt that mothers are closer to their sons in some things, some cases. I have to be honest. I felt that I didn't understand it then, but looking across the years now I see that mothers have a closer feeling to a son than a daughter. Until the sons are all married. And then she will turn to the daughter much more readily than the son. Until they get their own life. It would bother me a little, but I was very a contented child. It would hurt, but when I was very young I didn't understand it. I felt, 'Well, I must be in the wrong.' But basically sometimes I knew I hadn't started the argument, or I knew when he said I'd hit him first, I knew I hadn't. It would hurt. I would realize that, 'I'm getting it for him. He should really have got it from Mom.' But it didn't take me many years until I thought, 'She's just too busy. She's got too much to do and she's tired.' She should have just whacked him one but she just let it go, from being too tired and lots to do and everything. I didn't get the idea that the woman should do all the work. But she naturally – it was a big family, you see – she had a lot to do. But she used to take her time with us too, around the table and read books and chat to us an awful lot and explain a lot of things to us on certain days. And on other days when she was just too tired and too encumbered with work, which is even today, we would put it off to the next day. But Dad, you see, when he came in the evening, he would take a lot of time with us too. It was pretty even, but I suppose mother had less patience.

Denise learned from her mother, however, that women should have a choice about the number of children they have and the kind of work they do. She learned, too, that her mother resented being isolated and being treated as unequal to men. Encouraged by her mother, she resolved to 'go out and do better.'

> No, as a woman I learned this from my mother, that had she been given a choice – again, she was away ahead of her time, she'd be over 90 now – she learned that she did not care to have all those children so close together, and given an opportunity she wouldn't have. And believe it or not, I heard from my mother when I was six years old and younger that 'It is a man's world.' She resented that the men could seem to have it in many areas, easier than women. They could do things – go out on a Sunday afternoon, maybe go out and they could play cards with the neighbor and have a good time. Whereas she had to stay home with a bunch of babies. And she resented it even as a woman 75 years ago, which goes to show you that even then the woman felt downtrodden. Not downtrodden, but politically speaking, if there was anything in politics or anything and she gave her opinion as to what she thought a politician should do, she wasn't listened to. It didn't mean a thing. But yet she was a very bright and intelligent woman. And she felt and said many times, 'It's a man's world,' and she resented it. She resented it that she was cooped up at home. And there were lots of things she would have like to do, given a choice. So I didn't learn from my mother – I learned to do work and housework and do things well and everything – but I didn't learn from her that you have to just like this, every hour of your life. You should maybe try to do something else. And I did. I wanted to be beyond just going out and doing housework for somebody else. In my time you went out and cleaned somebody's house and polished their silver or did their laundry, and they paid you eight dollars a month or whatever. It just wasn't for me! I just hated doing somebody else's housework when I felt I could do something better. That determination was in me I guess – probably a natural instinct. I just couldn't stand to do somebody else's housework for some strange reason. I just wanted to be either in an office or in a hospital or just something else. I just couldn't stand to do housework. There was no meaning to it for me. And my mother didn't want us to go out and do housework for anyone else. She said that she did not want us to go into anyone else's home and clean their homes and everything. To her it was demeaning. We were capable, we had the intelligence of even clerking in a store or being a sales clerk or just anything better than that. Because she felt we could even get disrespect from either neighbors on the farms where we might be working, or whatever it was. She just didn't want her daughters in that field. She said, 'Go out and do better! No matter what it is. Just don't do housework for anyone else. Because I don't care if Mrs.Jones's tea silver is shining clean and you have to do it. I just don't care. You just go and do something better.' She just didn't want us to do it.

Asked, "What do you think about this saying: 'It's a man's world'?" Denise explains that this was true in her mother's time. She describes how her mother was tied to the work at home, while her father experienced relative freedom. She also describes how women were expected to be submissive to men (to doctors, priests, ministers and husbands), but at the same time were expected to be ultimately responsible for the success of marriage and for the raising of children.

> That was said by many older people. In a way it's kind of true because they did everything in those days. You know, there were no women missionaries, there were no women politicians. They believed it should be so. But I don't completely think it's a man's world. My mother used to say that a lot, because on a farm with all little children and everything, she could never get out hardly to go anywhere or do anything. She was completely too busy. Whereas my dad could go out and visit a neighbor, he could go to a town or something to do his shopping, do his groceries. He was freer in that way to just pick up and go, than she was. And they did an awful lot of the thinking – the missionaries, the priests and everything. And if you ever went to them with a problem, you always had to be the one to submit, submit, submit to the male, and make it work. For my mother, like if you had a problem and went like to a doctor, a priest, a minister, you always would be put into the submissive role. 'You'll have to do it in order to please your husband or make your marriage work.' It would never be said, 'Tell your husband to come in and see me; I'd like to talk to him, to get him to see your opinion and how you feel and that you have a right to some consideration.' It was always, always the other way. The woman had to save all the situations: the marriage, the bringing up of the children, and everything.

Denise explains, however, that she disagrees with the saying, "It's a man's world." For one thing, she thinks times have changed – that the separation of men and women into separate worlds outside and inside the home is decreasing, that women's needs and feelings are more respected, and that men's opinions are not necessarily valid.

> Well I don't think it's true. It's not a man's world. In a sense there's a lot more men in the public field of politics and everything, but that's not exactly their fault. There are many fine women coming up in the political field and in teaching and you name it. I don't think it's a man's world to that degree. Years and years ago they did the voting, they did the thinking. You weren't allowed to speak for yourself or anything. But not so today. I think it's everybody's world. Like I think a woman, like you know, who wants to do certain things and advance herself or do most anything, can accomplish it. You know, I really don't think it's a man's world at all. Oh, they do a lot of writing and they do a lot of editorials and everything, and writing newspapers and everything. But I have read some of it that was just very biased and you know, not the best of writing. It was their opinion. And then I maybe turned around and read something by a woman that was just super and very, very sensible. I don't think it's a man's world to that degree.
> I don't think it's that way anymore with young couples. Young men are definitely doing at least 50/50 to the raising of the children, helping the young working wife. They're very considerate of them getting out. And their feelings are respected. They're treated as persons. They have needs to be fulfilled too. I think that has really changed greatly. It's not a man's world. I think they've come a long way. I really do! And so it should be!

Denise explains above that she learned from her mother that she had a choice about the work she could do, and that she should try to do more work than housework. Below she explains that her father supported this idea – that he wanted all of his children to have an education. She describes how her parents valued education, reading and thinking, how her mother spoke several languages, and how her parents' practice of reading books and debating ideas prepared her for and supplemented her formal education.

My father was for it too. He was just dedicated to us being educated. From the time I was very, very little he wanted all of us to have education. He just instilled it in us very strongly that he never wanted us to leave school. And in those days, at least not leave school until we'd had our full grade 10, because in those days a grade 10 pass could go into a hospital and become a nurse or further themselves and get fairly meaningful jobs. He just didn't want us a grade three level reader. There was no way my dad wanted that. He felt that many people who didn't have it were just plain ignorant and they didn't respect other people through not having gone through a certain phase of education and learning. They just didn't treat their children right or their neighbors or anything. He considered them, I suppose, a little, not dumb, but certainly not very thinking people. And he wanted to make sure that we were not out in the world not contributing anything to the world or to something meaningful. He wanted us to be pretty fine people, that our lives would be worthwhile. My parents had education but they were self-educated. They probably had grade seven and eight. Like they came from the U.S. as very small children. But they read everything they could get their hands on. They read good books. They had good reading material come into the house and they just simply kept right on educating and reading good material. They valued that. And they could speak on any subject. My mother spoke three languages. She was great at languages. She could speak German, French and she could speak the Indian Cree. She could keep up a conversation with the native people. They just craved to just be about that. I don't know if you know the background of some farm people - they just think this long, and that's the end of the line. Some of their speech and some of their conversation is not even nice to listen to, and they think they're interesting. Well my dad just didn't think it was so interesting and funny. He wanted us to be able to speak for ourselves and be meaningful people. And that drive was in us to get fairly good work and understand what you read. Comprehend! If you've got a good piece of reading material and find that when you're reading it, understand it if it is a good material. And if it's something that somebody has written for the sake of writing, well discard what you certainly don't want to put in your life out of that piece of material. Because some people, some good writers can write some mighty fancy material and make it look good, if they're out to change a certain phase in life or ideas. Well he wanted us to be knowledgeable enough to be able to see through a lot of this. He would explain to us in a piece of reading material - he read a book and he would explain to us where that was not right - all that sounded fine but that is not right. He criticized what he read to us. If he saw us reading a book that we were very enthused and absorbed in, he would leave us read the whole book and then he'd read it. Or my mother would read it. What was nice about it was that quite often they had different opinions about it - my mother and father - and we got a cross-section of criticism. She could tell us why she didn't think it was quite that bad and that way. We got the two views right there in the house, of the view of, 'Oh well, that is not quite that bad. You're making it worse than it is because these things can happen and they might as well be prepared for it. You can't protect them from all of that.' Then we'd get Dad's view of how to protect ourselves against it, find then the outcome of certain things if you tried to do what you read in books or something. Because that's all there was in those days, was books and reading. There was no radio and television to go on. There was what you read or what you heard. And that can have a great deal of influence on your life. So it was a very rich, rewarding type of child background which I deeply appreciate today. Because it's fortunate that there were some people like that; others didn't care what their children read, what they did. They always had the feeling when they got to school that the teacher will straighten them out. But my mother and father decided that we'd be prepared for the teacher when we got there and they couldn't probably put ideas that weren't right into our minds. At least he always ended up by saying that these were his standards, or Mom, and we might go out and not live according to their standards, and it wouldn't necessarily mean we would be wrong. But we had enough of a guidance that we would not do anything seriously wrong.

A factor in Denise's young life that affected her schooling was the depression of the 1930's. She explains how the depression changed government policies regarding school curriculum and district organization. This resulted in changes in her own life: formal schooling became inaccessible and her hopes to be a nurse were destroyed.

> And then the depression came, and that threw everything. I wanted to be a nurse first but I wasn't able to continue at school. The schools were shut down and there were no teachers. The schools changed, because you see there was a little one-room school sitting maybe two and a half miles from your home, that took care of a complete district with maybe 40 or 50 children within a radius of three to four miles - they could get to that school. That was completely closed down, across the districts like. The schools were centralized into the small towns and grouped and bused and we couldn't always go. I lived maybe 15 to 20 miles from the nearest town. Well, then there was a bus - you would get to a certain point and just like it is today, you were bused to town. If you had a certain amount of money you had to pay then by the year. The bus driver had to be paid, the bus had to be provided and it all had to come out of the farmer's taxes. Well, if the farmer didn't have 25 cents, you just couldn't put your children on the bus. And also, the books changed. William Aberhart, premier then, changed a lot of books - they became condensed. Where you had your math and your arithmetic and not social studies in those days, learning to speak and write and all that, it was all compiled into a set of maybe three books, and the curriculum changed. And we couldn't take the same books as my older brothers had used for school, to go to a centralized school. We had to have new books. And we couldn't afford them, if you can believe it. So at 12 and 13 we were out of school.

Unable to attend school because there was not enough money for bus travel or for new books, Denise nevertheless attempted to carry on her education at home. Later her father placed her and her sister with his mother so that they could attend a convent and learn to read and write French. She explains that at this time it was usual that farm boys dropped out of school and went to work, and only the girls continued their education. This was true in her family, except for one brother, who continued to study on his own.

> I took books and everything and read. I got some math books and everything and kept up my school work. And Dad put us each, my sister and I, he put us with his mother in Morinville for a year apiece, from 13 to 14 at least. And we went to the convent as an outstudent and learned to read and write fluently in French. He thought at least it will be something. We spoke French before, but we didn't read or write it. He gave us a complete year of fluent French. He did that so we could further ourselves and we'd have that extra to go along with our grade six and seven, and at least that would have added to it for future use - be able to read and write the French language. So we each got a year. Well, I think I got two years because I was younger than her and I went when I was 11. I went for two years so I was 13. So in fact I was in grade seven in French. In two years I covered the French from grade one to seven. My brothers were out working. So it was the girls who continued the education and the boys went to work. They had to go to work because they were 14 and up, aged from 14 to 19. Most of them were not interested in education. The farm boys in those days, if they had grade seven, were considered pretty well educated. But they wanted to go out and make money to bring back home and help the family. What they did was they all got together, the four brothers, and they compiled enough money to buy a

tractor and formed kind of a business with my dad. And they went out and broke land for the other farmers - opened up the land and took the trees out. And so they were like a company. They were five men and they would go out and do this. It just had to be done; things like that had to be done. I have a second brother who hungered for education. He kept on with books and he was very musical. He kept on with books and borrowed books. People would give him books and he'd just read through them. He studied law and everything on his own because he hungered for it. It was meaningful, more meaningful to him.

The depression also affected Denise in terms of her attitude toward money - she learned to be cautious and careful. However, she feels that her essential values remained and were reinforced - values to do with creating one's own happiness, helping others, and appreciating good health and people who care.

I was very, very young when the depression came. The depression affected me - it didn't affect me personally within my own characterization of myself or anything. But it made me feel bad because you could never have a new pair of shoes, you could never have a new dress, you felt very lonely inside. You'd look at catalogues and different things and you'd long for these clothes and everything, and you'd make kind of an inner resolution then: if you ever had a job, you'd certainly have nicer clothes and things like that. But being as we were all together in it, no one was any worse off than the other. It didn't affect you in the sense that it changed your whole life, but it kind of made you tend to be just - you would never be foolish with money and ever find yourself in a position where you couldn't provide something for yourself you really wanted. I think it tended to make people from the depression really cautious, very careful of finances. Not that any of our parents could have done any different, because everybody was the same. The stock market and everything went so it wasn't really a fault of theirs that there was no money. But it made you think that you wouldn't squander it. You'd put a value on it. But I was a 14 or 15 year old girl. You looked forward to the day where you could have a nice paying job and be nicely dressed and everything, because the clothes was all patchy and it was over and over the same thing, patch over patch. It didn't hurt our pride, but it certainly wanted you to get a goal, to be sure that you'd be in a position that you wouldn't be deprived type of thing, through being careless and not caring. It certainly didn't make us less aggressive or anything - lazy or anything. It didn't defeat us. Not in any way. But it didn't make us money-hungry to the point either that you put your values aside to get an extra dollar when you were older, or anything like that. It didn't change the bad news. But I think it made a stronger person out of us - to be able to get through that. I think that when things get really rough or anything, or down and out, the depression had done this for people. It has made a strong people out of them. Some things you can buy with money are not necessarily the things that make you happy, in that sense. I believe that through the happiness that we created amongst ourselves at home during the depression. Dad would take a piece of wood and make a baseball bat, and Mom would take a skein of yarn and tighten up a ball to the extent and grab a piece of leather and stitch it very tightly, and we could go out and play baseball all day with this. It didn't need to be out of the store. It taught us creativeness. Much of it came out of that, the depression. It didn't defeat us. We learned to value other things that bring happiness - being together, being healthy, helping someone else that was worse off than you are. Some had absolutely nothing to eat in the house and my mother would probably bake something or take a half a dozen eggs and take out a piece of cloth or something and make the neighbor's baby a dress, and go over and take it to them. And you'd see these people crying and so appreciative that someone else thought about them. And it didn't take money to do this. Granted, you cannot live without money. It is a necessity of life, especially now, but money does not bring happiness in itself. It's how you use that money. Like you can

> be a very miserable person and have all kinds of money. So monetary value was not instilled in us to that degree. But to be sensible about it certainly was. If you have a dollar today, don't just burn it out on something absolutely useless, just freely and carelessly. Look out for the rainy day a little bit; have a cushion, in case of illness or something. But I would say that some rich people are very happy or seem to be happy, but I wouldn't say that it's money that did it particularly. They might be satisfied in their success in having achieved it. But good health and knowing somebody cares and knowing that somebody is there is important too.

At the end of the depression Denise resumed her schooling at the country school and then moved to Edmonton where she took secretarial training. She briefly outlines the various jobs she held after that, explaining that she always approached each new situation, including her buying and learning how to drive a car, with confidence.

> When I was 18 years old and the school reopened, I took my grade nine and ten and part of grade eleven in one year, walking three miles to a one-room school. After I finished school I came into the city then and got a job. When I came to Edmonton, my sister thought I was out of my mind when I went to the McTavish Business College and took a secretarial course. I was determined that I was going to have something for myself if I ever needed it someday. I didn't think that I would ever need it, but I wanted it. I got my certificate out of the McTavish Business Association and I worked as a bookkeeper for Henry Birks. I worked for them for a few years and then I was offered work in the offices at Woodwards. And then I was asked to go into the training school to train cashiers for Canada Safeway. I was there as a training teacher close to 11 years, like when I was married. And then our children were born and then when they went to school the people asked me - and then we had a Safeway withing three blocks of our home, and I was training cashiers and working there. And then in the final analysis I ended up as a school sceretary, working in schools for 14 years with students from grade one to nine. That was the most rewarding, was the school, working with children. I was there 14 years. That's pretty much it. I never went into anything that I didn't think that I didn't have the confidence that I could do this. I would observe in the sense - like driving a car for instance, before I bought my first car in 1956. I was standing there waiting for the bus and I would see people driving by and everything. And uppermost in my mind was, 'If they can drive a car, so can I.' And I bought a car, took a driver's course and had my car and did fine. I never went into anything with the feeling that I couldn't do it.

Another meaningful aspect of Denise's life as a woman is her maturing into womanhood at puberty. She explains that she saw this as natural and as related to her capacity to bear children. She had already witnessed an older sister develop and had been thoroughly prepared for menstruation by her mother.

> At puberty I was a very natural person with the natural phenomena of your body and life. That didn't bother me. I wasn't frightened or anything because I knew my mother was a healthy woman, was a happy woman. My sister ahead of me had gone through it and to me it was just, 'I'm a woman and this is part of my life. And it's for a reason that I am like this. And number one must be that a woman will bear the children. Otherwise I probably would never have periods or menstruation or anything. It's all part of the cycle, of the functioning of my body, and it's just like having a toothache or anything else. It's there and it's just part of my life.' It didn't really bother me or frighten me or anything. I was prepared. My mother told me. I say my mother and father were way ahead of their time. My mother would speak

> freely of prostitution in 1935 to 1940, as they do it in the open media today. Whereas the word wasn't even mentioned in her home. We were very fortunate people. She explained when we learned that women sold their bodies – my mother explained that if that woman didn't sell her body to a man who is necessarily inclined to need this sort of thing, you wouldn't be safe in years to walk down the street. It is a good evil – a bad evil on the one hand, and it is a necessary evil on the other. It protects you and I. And that was really something when you think back 50 years to a person being able to say things like that. And not frighten you with life and its happenings. She did not accept it and say that it was a good thing, but it was a necessary evil. It wasn't hidden from us. We knew when we heard about it or saw it; we could sort it out in our minds and put it into its right perspective. And it didn't, as they say, throw us. Which, when I think back on it, they were away ahead of their times. And as girls we were prepared by my mother and everything about how careful we must be, because then we could conceive after that. That was a very important factor in a woman's life. I can remember exactly. She told us about the lining of the womb, the uterus, how it came away every month, it rebuilt itself, and the egg and the ovary, everything.

After she began menstruating Denise's mother also informed her about the consequences of sexual intercourse, and taught her to respect her body. Denise explains that the only preventions for pregnancy at that time were lack of sexual desire, fear of becoming pregnant and consequently being disgraced, and fear of being the object of men's jokes. In spite of the early fears she is comfortable being a woman and glad to be feminine.

> And she said at a certain time if we had anything to do with a boy, any sexual intercourse, that we could become pregnant and we'd have to bear the consequences. Naturally in those days you would be practically shunned and disgraced, and it would just not be a very nice experience. So we were taught to respect our bodies as a woman. And that also, a man did not necessarily love a girl or think more of you if you had relationships with them. Not to fool ourselves; they would probably turn around and laugh at us amongst themselves in a crowd. And that deterred us more than anything else – to think that these fellows would laugh at us. For some reason it wasn't as enhanced as it is today, the necessity for it. We had no desire and we probably had enough fear, which I suppose was necessary. It was the only preventative in those days, to just not ever think that we would go all the way, as they called it, with a boy. Myself, I had no great desire. I was happier dancing, doing other things. But we were very well prepared for life. That's why I say very lucky. Each was put in its right perspective in the sense that no matter how hard a woman tries, she can never replace a man to a certain degree, ever, because we each have our own function and we're not to downgrade ourselves. We're just as equal as they are, but we could never totally be exactly what a man is because we're not. And a man should not try to be a woman either because he's not. But of course there's a lot of mix-ups nowadays, and it's health-wise, or physical, or psychological, or whatever it is. It's there. It always has been, but much of it was hidden. It's sad because some people could have had help and probably didn't get it. Or didn't understand. It's probably better in some ways today. There probably was a lot of it but they kept it to themselves and suffered. But they probably still suffer today in confusion. Now maybe at a certain age a boy or girl who has a very bad experience – their minds can play tricks on them, and they can get very confused. But it's not too prevalant, I don't think. I think it would right itself. For me, I was very comfortable with myself. It was not at all traumatic. But for some it is. I have enjoyed my life and I would not change my sex. I'm glad I'm feminine.

To Denise, having an interesting discussion and enjoying herself dancing was more important than romance. She didn't like the idea of men treating her as a sexual object and wasn't afraid to say so, having been trained by her parents to assert herself.

> There weren't too many men in my life because I was a very independent person and I wasn't interested sexually. I was a very, very lucky person I guess. I never had a great sexual desire, even through puberty. I just loved to be with a boy and have a good time, and I wasn't too much for letting them touch me or anything unless I really, really cared. And there were only two. The first one I married and then I was a widow for 10 years, and then I remarried. But my relationships were very friendly and very happy but very short. Because I couldn't be bothered with going out with them and dancing and going out on a nightly basis if I didn't really care. I was different that way I guess. Some girls had to need to have an escort to go to a dance, no matter if they really cared for him. They'd go anyway, but I didn't. If I didn't care for their company on a communicative basis of talking or exchanging ideas or anything, I just didn't bother. So I didn't have any great interest in romances or anything. I could go out to a show with my sister and enjoy it just as much as going with a fellow I didn't care for. It was just a boring evening for me if I went with someone I didn't care for. I couldn't wait to get home. So I just didn't bother. But if they were good dancers and I could trust them that they wouldn't try anything indecent or anything – if they would take me dancing that was just the greatest, because I loved to dance. But as soon as it was over I wanted to be home and that was it. The association was over. And if they tried to kiss me too much or put their hands where they shouldn't, that just didn't go over with me. I just didn't. And luckily I was trained by my parents; I wasn't meek and mild. Like some girls don't like it but they haven't the courage to say so. And I did. Like I didn't care if they liked me after that or not. I didn't have a popularity plight. Like some girls need to be popular with a lot of boys. I just never cared for that, whereas some girls do go out of their way to be popular with a lot of others. I wasn't, so I didn't really have any great interesting romances.

Above Denise mentions that she married twice. She explains further that her first husband was killed at the end of World War II, the specific circumstances having been kept from her by the War Secrets Act.

> My first marriage was through the war of course. We were really in love. We were married and we had the first son. And my husband was killed in an accident after the war, and then I was a widow for 10 years. He stayed in the services, transporting the troops from Halifax to England – that was in the medical section, and picking up troops and bringing them back to Halifax. And someplace there was a strange accident on a boat in the English Channel, possibly mines or something that wasn't all cleaned out. Something happened anyway, but you never get the real truth of it. It was just an explosion at sea. He was an officer in the medical, so he had a good salary. There was relatively no other kind of work in those days in the medical corps. You're given a certain study all through the army in the medical corps – first aid and extended services – and he became an officer in that field and liked it well enough to stay with it. And since the war was over, travelling back and forth seemed perfectly safe until there was an accident of some sort on the boat. We really never got the whole truth of it because you get your war telegrams and your information and there's no way to get to the bottom of it. So you just kind of have to forget about it, about what happened. It's the War Secrets Act.

Denise describes the kind of relationship she had with her first husband – how they

were both friends and lovers, and how she still perceives the relationship as very special. She explains that they were married six years before he went overseas during the war, and that she is glad to have experienced the quality of love she had with him, for as long as she had it. Thirty years later particular sounds and sights still trigger Denise's memory of him and the special love they shared.

> But our relationship, well it's a thing that, it's a very hard thing to describe the kind of love that we had. Because my mother said, 'Of all the men that have gone overseas, if anyone isn't going to come back it will be him. Because there is not too many people that have this kind of love. It comes once in a lifetime, and it just might not last. Because people love each other but they don't like each other,' she said. His name was Billy and she said, 'You and Billy are very much in love but you also like each other.' He probably could have put his dirty work boots in the middle of my kitchen or living room, and I probably would take them and clean them and polish them. That wouldn't even have hurt me. So it was a devotion and a love. When he left, for two or three years after, I could still feel his presence; could feel him giving me strength. It was a very difficult and sad time, very much, but it wasn't a love that comes every day. A friend of mine said the other day, 'There is no perfect love.' But my mother said, 'That was a perfect couple, and there is that possibility that it's too good to be true. Be prepared that it could just be that it's just too good for this world; he just might not come back.' We liked each other. We'd have our little arguments or something, but I liked what he did and he liked the way I did things and we liked each other. How I did things, he'd always be pleased and say how nice it was and how nicely I did it. He'd take time. And everything he did for me was always right as far as I was concerned. And I'm sure it was because he was a very nice person. You know, there are many lovers who don't like each other. They hate – they put up with it because of the physical love, but they don't like the person particularly. But there is that sort of a love – the chemistry is there and everything, but the liking that person and what they do, sometimes they just hate some of the things they do. I had both: the liking and the loving. And it sure makes you a very happy person. You feel so – it's just so very difficult to explain – because how to put it into words, that your life is so full? And you realize how lucky you are. But in realizing that there's a fear of losing, of something happening, because you know very well that it's like my mother said, 'Too good to be true.' You don't have the fear but yet you do. You want it to be forever, but yet you know somehow that it might not be. And there's a lot of trust. They could go anywhere away from you or anything and there's that trust. You know that they won't do certain things and it's such a good feeling. It's part of my life that I'm so glad I had, because I know what love is and the ability to love and the completion of real love at least. I've had that, and many people never know it. Because they don't have the capability of loving or the ability to love as much, in giving love. That's also something that they miss in life, but they just don't have it. Whereas we both had it for each other. It was really wonderful! It was very difficult to lose, but a few years of realization that you might never have had it, you figure it's better to have had it than never to have known this. We were married six years before he went overseas. Altogether it was seven years. So that's quite a long time. That's quite a long time. But it's still quite vivid in some of his actions and some of the things he said and everything. Even yet today, and that was some 30 years ago. Switching on a light, flicking the light switch in a bathroom or something – the sound of it will remind me sometimes, away back, a flash of memory. Or somebody with slightly greenish eyes or something, or a silhouette of a head, or something in a crowd – even 30 years later – will give you that little quickness, just remind you of it. Or a snowy day or a piece of music, just little things which are very normal to thousands of other people. You don't forget. But some people want to

> forget, since it probably wouldn't be there anymore. I don't know for sure. It was very special. Very special! Very, very special! And it was the first meeting, this is another thing too that I meant. We fell in love the first night we met. We knew there was just something there; we just cared. And of course it grew better and better all the time. But we knew we wanted to see each other again immediately from the first evening we met. I was 20 then. And I was in Edmonton, working for – by that time I was probably working in the offices of Henry Birks, bookkeeping for Henry Birks. And there was a feeling of something that we just communicated without words, sort of thing. Just one one of those things. It just happened. And it was an evening where my sister begged me to go to a show with her. I didn't want to go; I wanted to stay home because I wasn't for going out as much as her. And we came out of the show and these two fellows were standing on the corner of 101 Street and Jasper. And the fellow that Bill was standing with knew my sister very well and started talking to her and everything, and he asked my sister to come in and have coffee. And they jumped on the bus with us – because people didn't have cars in those days – and we sat and chatted there that evening. And he phoned – this was about a Wednesday – and he phoned Saturday night and we started going together from there on in. It was a very happy relationship. Very happy! Lots of fun talking and going to shows and skating, and just very happy to be together. And I always remember the show. It was Elizabeth Taylor in her first movie there where she rode in the Kentucky Derby with her hair caught in a little cap, you remember. I'll always remember the show. That was what it was. She was about 10 or 11 years old.

Describing her adjustment to her husband's death, Denise clarifies that it was at this stage in her life that she took secretarial training. She tells that she felt more empathy and support from men than from women at this time, feeling that the men admired her determination to manage on her own. In contrast, women seemed intent on having fun, apparently not wanting to face how they would handle Denise's situation or possibly being afraid they couldn't be as strong as she was. This she found to be true of her family as well as friends. She describes how it especially hurt her that her sisters resented babysitting for her.

> My relationship with my husband was a thing that you can hardly talk about, in the sense that it was a real love and very, very difficult to forget and very difficult to accept at the time, that he had to be one of them that was gone. But you had thousands of others in the same situation so it was a part of your life that you just had to live through. And I went to work. I finished my school. It was then that I went to McTavish Business College, got my business course, and you just kind of lived it out because you knew you weren't alone, you weren't the only one. But it was a very difficult time. Through that I will say this, that your greatest empathy or sympathy of consideration of feeling for you came from men more than women. The men had more of a really sympathy, if you can call it consideration of you, at the moment – surviving the issue, holding your job, looking after your child. They had a greater admiration of you, and were more willing to help you in every way they could because you were helping yourself – more than women. If you were stuck with a load of groceries at the store, your car wouldn't start, they would be right there to start the car. They'd tow your car home, they'd take your groceries home and they'd never make any physical demands on you. They admired you for your strength and what you were doing. They thought it was just great and they just couldn't do enough for you. Whereas women just sort of politely, not ignored you, but didn't even know what was going on inside your mind or how much you hurt or anything. They didn't

> seem to be aware of it. I found that men there really showed a great empathy and consideration, and didn't make any demands on you physically. Like because of what they were for me, never once did they demand anything in return. That was one experience that I found. For women it was too much trouble to help you. If you were trying to start your car on a very cold day, they would walk by and just sort of politely say, 'Well, I'll see you,' and away they went. They never stopped to see if they could do anything or come and visit you ar anything. They never really went much out of their way. They just didn't want to hear the misery. I think what was happening, what I found, was they soon tired of you talking of your ever-loving husband that you had lost, and how lonesome you are and how sad you are, a lonely widow. They will listen to it once whereas a man could sit and have a cup of coffee with you, and put you over a bad spot for an hour. Give you all the time in the world and yet never made any physical demands or asked for anything in return. That was one experience that I found very hard. I found that women soon wanted to be where all the laughter was and all the fun, more than the men. That was a strange thing, but there it was. Even in brothers and sisters. My own brothers would do far more for me than my sisters. That went all the way down the line - friends, family - showing that the males were the greatest helper - if there was anything he could do for you. But the woman was too busy. She had her own little fun to do and her own little thing to go to and her own hair to get done and her makeup and everything. She just didn't want too much involvement because it encroached into her time of enjoying her life. Whereas a man could give a lot of time. As I say, never put any physical demands in return. But I think it was because of the admiration that I wasn't sitting around crying, demanding a lot of help. I was really struggling and doing it. I never cried about it or talked about it or showed that it was even going on, and I think there was a kind of male admiration. The strength alone was showing and they reacted to it. I think that the women probably thought that if ever they were in the same position, it frightened them in the sense that, 'Would I be able to do this if this happened to me?' So they didn't want to touch it too much - like a fear of it. They admired me but they didn't like me in the sense that I represented a strength that they were afraid they didn't have. That's the meaning I got out of it. Many times I was hurt through my own sisters, who had to babysit my child, and they didn't always act happy about it. Many's the time I would ride on a bus and say to myself - I was a Catholic and a Christian - and I used to ask God to forgive them because they didn't know what they were doing. 'They don't know how I feel. They don't mean to be doing this to me. They just don't know how I feel.'

Denise explains that women who are presently experiencing difficulties are now able to appreciate the difficulties she went through as a widow. She describes the aspects of her life that gave her meaning and helped her to continue - her baby son, her desire to create the kind of home her husband had wanted, and the support she was given by her male bosses at work. She explains that she had no intent in remarrying quickly, and describes why she rejected two male friends in particular.

> By the same token I'm going to come back in the circle and say that five different women have come to me when something has happened to one of their children in their teenage years, situations in their life have come the full circle back to me and they said, 'My God! How did you feel? We didn't have a clue. How now, when you tell us to get through this, how did you do it? What did you do to get through it the way you did?' And you can't really - you can tell them how you felt, how you reacted, but if they don't have the strength to get up every morning at 6:30, dress up and go to work no matter how you feel, they won't be able to do it, will they? Like I just went to work and that was the end if it. I just didn't stay moping around the house. Part of

it too, was the fact that my first husband loved books, loved reading. He was very bookish. He wanted a nice home, he wanted books and music and a comfortable home – not a mansion or anything, but a warm sort of atmosphere. So that kept me going in the sense that I thought, 'Well, this is what he wanted and I'll make it that way. And I'll raise our son in that atmosphere.' So that's what I did. I got enough money, I bought a little house and I furnished it nicely, and I had a nice bookcase and nice books, and I lived 10 years like that, until I remarried this man when the boy was 10 years old. When my first husband was killed the boy was about six months old. That was a great help too, of course – that gave me something to live for. Just a very short honeymoon and you hardly need to say any more. It gave me something to live for, and he was a lot like his dad, so that was great. But as far as getting in with other men and wanting to marry shortly, I had absolutely no interest whatsoever. I did have two friends but it was just a very short friendship. I could see that it wouldn't work with a child, and I wasn't going to have any part of that. And then the second friendship was very short too. I just didn't care for him, though he cared greatly for me, in the sense that he would probably have been good to the child and everything. But he was 10 years younger so I just gave that up. And all of our family held our age. Like I was probably about 30 and he probably thought I was about 21. For years and years we just kind of held our age. We always were taken years younger than we were, even today somehow. Like no one will believe that I'm 65 next March. So that's the way it goes. It was hard, but as I say, in the male world I was accepted very well and helped and promoted in any situation. When I got into the Safeway store I was a hard worker. I was a conscientious worker and I was very quick at my work. And in no time at all they promoted me to first cashier. And two years up the road they put me in their training school, training cashiers. They did not hold me back. Many of the women were jealous of this in a way. Not jealous, but they probably could have done as well as I could for a cashier in training, but they gave me the opportunity because they could see the greater need for it. So in that way they were very considerate. So I got very much support. Very much support. From the men.

Elaborating on her experience of a lack of support and lack of empathy from women, Denise now realizes that women were caught up in their own lives and did not understand her situation. Women at home, she thinks, might have resented that she was out working and they were not. Women she worked with, not knowing she was a widow, didn't understand her commitment to her job and felt jealous about her promotions.

I suppose some of the women that were back at home probably thought I was lucky to be out working, but didn't know that I would have traded places with them. Because between women there's not always the right communication. They'll say something in their minds, react to it, and their feelings toward you will be a resentment or something. Rather than speak out and say, 'Now you're having it tough and everything, you're a widow, but I'd trade places with you and go out in that working world. I'm sick of being home with three little kids.' But they won't tell you that. So they don't think you have it that tough. They think you're luckier than they are. That's lack of communication between women. You get 50 or 60 women in a big business corporation, secretaries, clerk–typists, you get them and they will not blend together. They're their own worst enemy that way. Whereas I made myself blend with both men and women. I would not let a woman dislike me. I would find out why she disliked me. I wanted to know, 'Why do I bother this person? Is it the way I talk? Why does she snub me?' I'd make a point to find out why she snubbed me and then I'd humorously get her out of it. A lot of humor to get her out of it. I wouldn't hurt feelings or anything, but I'd find

a sense of humor and the first thing we knew we were good friends, and I was a different person than she thought I was. She found out that I wasn't the person she thought – that I did have feelings, that I did care – by finding out what I was about. Then she didn't resent me as much. First and foremost they thought I was a climber and I wanted to get to the top of the ladder, no matter what. And I was absolutely the opposite. I would have stayed a clerk–typist for 10 years and never grumbled. But if I was capable and moved on to another position because the boss saw that I could do it and do it very conscientiously, not make any mistakes in answering that telephone or taking a message properly or turning off any customers, they put me in there. Not because I asked but because he thought, 'She won't turn off any customers in this store, or on that telephone. She treats them right and they'll be back.' Whereas the other party, just someday if she isn't feeling good, just might turn off a customer and you lose a customer. You wouldn't put her in that position. But she didn't realize she was doing it to herself by being moody or coming in not feeling good someday. And I was always on a pretty even keel. Once I was at work, it was my work. I didn't bring in my home problems into my job. I left them at home and did my day's work as best I could. Whereas some people bring them into the job and it interferes with being promoted. But they don't realize that. They blame the boss. The women I worked with misunderstood the situation – my need for the job and doing it well and needing to hold that job to support myself and my child. Many of them didn't even know I was a widow until they got talking to me. They thought I was married and had a double salary and everything. They didn't even take time to find out. But the fact that I didn't bring all this into the job made me more efficient on the job.

When Denise did marry again, 10 years later, it was to a long time family acquaintance with whom she felt comfortable and secure. She explains that although this relationship is very different from her first marriage, she finds it very satisfying.

I did get married again, but 10 years later. And that was a long time family acquaintance. Like the man I'm married to now. My sister married his brother and that friendship grew through a period of maybe two years by being at family gatherings and the dinners and everything. He was a bachelor. He was about 38 years old, and I knew his family background, I knew his brothers and sisters. And I knew exactly the type of person he was and I knew exactly that he would be a very good husband and a very good companion and there'd be no demands on me. And I knew his mother and father and their type of life. And it was a very nice relationship and a very, very good marriage. A very satisfying – very satisfactory! Very! To me it meant a very good and happy relationship in the sense that when you've lived alone for 10 years, you appreciate a good person and a considerate person. And they can just be sitting in their chair and not talking for three hours, but you know they're there. And you've known loneliness and you just know it's better than being alone. Maybe not the same deep intensive love, but certainly the same admiration and consideration and appreciation. It's somebody you can trust, somebody that respects you and cares for you, and it's a full life. We were together for two years before we got married, which was very, very nice. He was very good, both to me and the boy, and he still thinks the world of him. And I just knew that I wasn't making a mistake because he wasn't no stranger to the family. He knew what I was and everything, and my situation. And everything was accepted and we loved each other very much and it worked out beautifully. It will be coming up 25 years since we were married. I probably couldn't forgive him his faults as a younger person, as quickly as I would have the first man, but rather than look at the faults I think on the qualities as you grow old. Fine qualities, and it soon eliminates the little frustrating things which are so minor. Like the very menial, minor, everyday things which a person should hardly relate to, but I suppose it's the little things that make or break marriages or friendships. Maybe having to wait for something to be done around the house, or maybe wait for three months

> before it gets done. I think nothing of that now. It's so minor. But things that I relate to that bother me – not bother me but I feel I've missed a lot – is that I love to dance, and he doesn't dance at all. I love to play cards and he doesn't play cards at all. That was all a very entertaining evening for me, was to play with friends and have a nice game of cards – bridge or something, which the first husband just loved. He was much more bookish and read and everything, and much more alert in noticing things. Whereas now I just don't worry that much about it. I think of how steadfast he is and that he's a good provider and that, and I just had to let that slide out of my life and make up with other things.

Determined to not compare her marriages and to facilitate living in the present, Denise vowed never to let the fact of her first marriage interfere with her second one. Her concern was with letting go of the past and living for the present in order to make the most of each day. To this end she has purposely not told people that she was previously married, leaving them to believe that her present marriage is her only marriage. This information explains in part the discrepancies in the early part of the interview, when Denise talks about having stayed home with her children when they were young and only going out to work when her children were in school. Perhaps also reflected in the discrepancies is a tendancy to talk in terms of an ideal rather than what was real, as she did initially in her discussion of her mother.

> When I got married I did what probably very few people know, that this is my second marriage. Maybe 10 people other than my family. Even the people I worked with all these years never knew that he was my second husband. I did not tell them. I made it *the* marriage. I didn't let the first one overlap into the second one. I closed the book on the day when I married Van. I absolutely closed the book and sealed it and I have never reopened it in front of him. We never mention his name, any of the past, or anything. It's as if he didn't exist. In my heart he's there, and in my dreams and memories I have to myself. But I never, never let anybody know because I feel it wouldn't be fair to Van. I never compare him at all. He is Van, I married him, this is my marriage and I am determined it was going to work. It was going to be happy and I just never compared. He's not as alert in the sense that for reading certain things or communicating or talking with me. Like Billy and I could talk like you and I for three hours. Van is not a talkative person in the sense of deep conversation. And intellectually he's not nearly as much as the first husband. But I say, 'Well, who knows? Maybe the other one would have given all that up too, 10 years up the road. I was only married to him for seven years, so maybe this is better than the first.' I have to accept that this is good. I look for the good qualities and I think of what is here today, not what is gone behind me. Because you can't change that. You can change tomorrow and the next day a little bit, but you can't change yesterday. So let yesterday lie and go on with what you have. You can only use yesterday as a learning experience to better tomorrow. You can't live in it. You don't always do it perfectly. You make your silly mistakes along the way. You make your mistakes just like everybody else and then you have to correct them and all this. But you learn not to repeat that same mistake of saying nasty things or doing things that hurt your husband. You learn not to do them over and over. There are certain things that I know he doesn't like. I just don't do it, in the sense that nagging him for instance, or pushing him to get something done. I just let him be. When he's ready he does it. It's not that important. That's one thing I learned throught the loss of the first one – how much is not important. Live and make today important, because tomorrow might not be

there. It's so important! Even with your children. Never miss a day that you can love them or share something with them or make them feel really important as people. Make them learn to like themselves and to value themselves because like I say, tomorrow might not be there. Don't waste any time giving out love and understanding, as much as possible anyway. You're only human. But that's why I feel that the role of a woman is ever much more necessary in that way than a man. Because men just don't have as much of themselves it seems, to give that. You can't picture the world as all male or all female anyway. But that's more or less my life as a woman. I've never regretted ever being born a woman.

It becomes clear from Denise's answers to other questions, that her life experience has left her a strong woman who has the capacity to understand the pain and difficulties of others. Asked, "What do you value about yourself?", she responded that she values her sensitivity to other people's pain, and her desire to help them when they want help. She recognizes that some people, including her husband, are not particularly affected by other people's pain, and although she tends to judge them for this she sometimes wonders if life wouldn't be easier if she was less sensitive.

I think one of the things that I value possibly the most is I'll always help somebody. I value the fact that if somebody hurts, I hurt with them. And I know how it feels and I can do something for them rather than just getting so blase and let them suffer. I value that in myself. I really do! Like if a person is really feeling down and out, and they needed help, I can just pack it in and go and spend two whole days with them. I won't baby them or mollycoddle them, but I will try everything I can to pick them up and put them back on their feet. I won't tell them I'm doing it or anything, but I'll just do something to help them. And I value that I have that in me. I really do value that. That caring for other people. I'll do something about it. I won't ignore it if I can do something. I'm glad that I've got that. Maybe most people have it but I would hate not to have it because I think it's a gift sort of thing. It's not anyone's fault if they don't have it, but it's almost like fate – it's a gift. You have it or you haven't. And you can overdo it too. You have to be cautious of it because sometimes you can go out and help someone and they'd just as soon you didn't. You have to know when to do it. It can be pushing in sometimes, where they'd just as soon cope with it by themselves. You have to know. Like I've waited with a few people, when I knew they really needed help, and they kept talking to me on the phone or something, and I would tell that they've just about reached the crying stage or they can't cope with it anymore and I'll say, 'Would you like company?' 'Oh, would you please?' Well then I go, 'Would it disturb you if you could come and spend the day or something?' Then I'll go and tidy up the house or do something that is bothering them and they couldn't do. And I know they'll feel better then. But I will not push in. Because I have learned it's better to leave them if they want to cope, and let them ask, well, at least come close to asking, before you go in. But I value that. That I have that to help other people, and to understand when someone is hurting and to recognize it. I feel that what it means to me is I'm glad I'm not blinded to it. I think it would be terrible if your neighbor was sitting maybe in their home, and they'd give anything if you'd just cross over and do something. Or if only they could just have somebody do this for them, but then you don't recognize it and they're suffering. I'm glad that I have it because of that. Or if I was blind to it I'd think, 'Oh my gosh, that person could go on and I could have done this and that and just imagine what I could have done.' They might tell you six months up the road, 'I'd have given anything if you could have just come the other day and did this or did that.' Which probably would happen if I wasn't able to notice it. I'm glad I'm not blinded to it. I would just hate to miss someone that could have really had a

> real lift or saved them from something, because I wouldn't notice it and I couldn't help them. That's the only explanation I guess for it. Like I say, I don't make a policy of trying to cure the ails of the world. I just am conscious. If I notice they need help, I will be available and let them come for help or whatever. I won't just drive myself in because they might just like to cope on their own, or just don't want to be bothered with anyone else. That I recognize too, which I'm glad. But I would hate to be insensitive because I think through feeling other people's pain, you can better deal with your own when it comes your way. You know how another person feels and that tomorrow will be better. It's not always going to be this way. There is a light up the road. And I'm glad I'm not insensitive. On the other hand I suppose you can be too sensitive. What bothers me, the other person it won't even bother them, so they're better off in a sense than I am, because they're getting through that with no problem at all. So maybe I am a little too sensitive to other people's pain. You can probably go both ways. Because sometimes it's not as serious as you're afraid it is. It looks more serious to you. My own husband is like that. He does not feel other people's pain. He just doesn't. I don't know if it's insensitive or because his nature is better than mine. He knows that it's there, they'll get over it, it'll be over in time. And maybe he deals with it even better than I do. I know I judge him, but I've often thought that sometimes I wish I was more like that. But still, I recognize how they feel and it's something I value. Because if they come out and tell you how they're feeling and what is going on inside of them, you can help them because you know how they feel.

The following contains an example of how Denise's experience as a widow enables her to help others with their pain. Also evident is that her years of working in a school have contributed to her ability to understand the problems of young people.

> A lot of people who really love someone, and there's an engagement or something, and they've broken up and they feel really bad, I still have said to them, 'You're very lucky because you might never have known this situation, this love, this feeling, this ecstasy. If you didn't feel it you'd be like a vegetable.' And if the person is 17 or 18 or 19 and you say to them, 'It is a cushion and a buffer for your system for the bigger ones up the road, and you will be through with this. Tomorrow you're going to get up and feel rotten, the next day you won't feel so bad, some night it will go away and everything will be brighter the next day. Consider it a piece of luck that you feel this way; you could be a vegetable and feel nothing. And then you'd be worse off.' That's the way I consider it. They say they feel better after somebody talks to them. Because, 'Believe me,' I tell them, 'and really believe it and hope you will feel better. It's just time is your best friend. How much time it takes will depend on your own system, but believe it or not, it is a thing that you do get over. But it's not easy. I'm not trying to say that you will not feel pain. You will and you'd just better feel it. Don't shun it and cover it. Like if you've got the flu, go to bed, go to bed and take an aspirin and a hot drink and stay there. You've got the flu, you have a right to have the flu, you deserve three days in bed or five or whatever. Have the flu to its fullest extent and enjoy your flu.' And I said, 'If you're depressed, do the same thing. It might last two or three weeks. You're depressed! Take a good hot drink of cocoa, have a box of chocolates and a book and enjoy your depression. You deserve three weeks in bed. Let it ride out and then you'll feel better. Because it's just like the flu or another illness. But you will get over it. Just motivate yourself a little bit every day though. Do something useful every day. Don't just sit there. Run around the block or do something, make those wooden legs run. Run! Get the circulation going.' But it's by chance that some of us are more capable of handling it than others. I feel sorry for people who can't cope. And you see it so often in the schools, in the young junior high students. I didn't know it but I wondered so much when I'd hear, 'I just can't cope.' But I sure know what it means now, through having worked there. They really can't deal with certain situations and they get very

depressed. From there it's, well, some drugs probably or liquor or something, or even worse, suicide, because they just don't have that little bit of cope. It's their peers and their friends, of course, that make so much difference to these children, unfortunately. If you've got a good little group of friends and you're in, you're fine. If you haven't, it's really sad.

Denise also prides herself in being able to analyze a situation, understand complexities and put problems into perspective. Again she refers to young people, stating directly that she values the years she worked in a school and the experiences she had which taught her to be understanding and wise.

I guess I like being able to analyze and see a situation for what it is, an analyzation of something, and be able to understand the complexities of a certain thing. And not make it worse than what it is when people do things. Like as you're bringing up your children, sometimes a teenager will do something or you'll hear about something or that, and I'm glad that I'm able to analyze it as youth doing something, and it isn't really that serious. And thinking back and thinking, 'I remember trying to do the same thing when I was young, and it isn't that terrible.' You know, being able to bring things into the right perspective. The ability to do that. And not coming down on a person for something that isn't really as serious as what another person might think it is. And recognize that probably thousands of other people have done the same thing and it doesn't really mean that they're going to be terrible people. I think it means security in a way, because you are not completely upheaved over everything. A sense of peace. Being able to see things for more or less what they are. And it gives you a sense of peace and puts far less stress and pressure on you than long days of thinking, 'What will become of this because this was done?' And nothing will ever come of it. I can't think of anything just now, as a particular example or anything. Well, say a young fellow would play hookey from school or something and some maybe might think, 'Oh God! He's going to be a problem.' Well I learned that a child can play hookey from school and go downtown maybe once on school days, and it doesn't mean he's going to be a bum. It just means he just felt like doing that that day. And maybe it's good he did. Because maybe further on he's just wanted to do something and did something worse. I'm glad that I have that ability to put things in their right perspective. But that I think has come from rubbing elbows and seeing students and teachers and parents and everything. I value the fact that I have 14 years at that school. It has enhanced my life very much in dealing with human nature. And not as they say, make a mountain out of a molehill. I value that very much, that experience that I had at that school. Very much! And the ability to many times be in a discussion in the staff room, where things came to a conclusion and a resolution satisfactorily, and that I had that experience. I really appreciate that! I value that very much and it has helped me a lot, having been out there in that field. Especially in human nature. Business office is one thing, but when you deal with young students – I saw some of those students from the time they entered grade one and I've seen them come out of university – from that time, some of them. And I've really valued that because it has made me realize that, in spite of many little things, through their teen years they become people. Like they can be the mouthiest and really say nasty things in grade seven and eight, and you see them in grade 12 and they've become – like I used to say, 'So-and-so is a person now' – they've become people. They're out of the rat race. But it was very rewarding and I value that, that I saw the outcome of some of that. It helped me maybe to help my son and daughter-in-law with my grandchildren, because I can say to them, 'It isn't all that serious. Don't put any pressure on them. That's not going to be too bad at all. Just be very cautious with it and deal with it very subtly. Don't make a big issue out of it because I saw it 100 times and it's just nothing really.' To stop them from worrying for nothing. I hope that can be done. And I value that experience.

Her sense of independence, confidence in handling her affairs and courage to act on her own behalf are also aspects of herself that Denise values.

> I value many things, but they're pretty daily. Like I said, good health and being independent. Being able to do anything I want to do almost – writing a letter, dealing with a business situation or just anything like that. Well, I don't know if that's a value but I appreciate that I can do that rather than have to wait for somebody else to do it for me or something. I really think it's more appreciation than value I guess, that I can do that.
>
> And I'm grateful because I just can go ahead and do a lot of things. And that dates away back to when my sister thought I was so foolish, during the war, to enter a business college and go through a complete business course and get a business certificate, for what she couldn't tell. And I said, 'I want it! I want it! I want this! Some day I'll be glad I've got it.' And I am. So I value, I suppose, that I have the confidence, the courage, the motivation of doing it. Like being able to motivate myself.

That her health, independence and confidence are truly valued is verified in that Denise speaks of these aspects also in response to the question, "What do you value in your life?"

> In my life? Well I suppose that one of them is certainly good health, because without it you certainly are not functioning properly or thinking properly. I'm very, very grateful to have good health. With that you go on your daily work to the things you want to do; you're able to do them.
>
> As a single woman – I have to speak as a married woman, but even as a single woman I valued good health very, very much. Because if there's anything that will change your whole life, it's to become physically ill or disabled or anything.
>
> And I value the fact too that I can just lock the door, go out of the house, walk down the street, take a bus, function, go about my business, do my banking, do my business. And have confidence to do it and not be restricted by fears and inhibitions or nervousness that I would be scared to do all this or anything, or be dependent on someone else. I value very much all the things I can do for myself.

That Denise values her independence is evidenced again as she speaks about friendships. She explains that although she enjoys sharing ideas and experiences, she has not really depended on her friends. Rather she tends to sustain herself and be busy with her own activities. She reflects that were she not close to and often in touch with her family, she might have developed closer friendships.

> Friends have been important to me too, at times. A good friend – like you and I sitting here today for instance. Let's say a person is having a bad day, the doorbell rings and in comes this cheerful face. And you have a cup of tea or coffee and you get to talking and you find that at some time or other they've had the same emotions and downs that you have. Yes, a sharing. Yes, it has meant a lot. Not extensively because I kept to be a fairly busy person, kept active and that, so I wasn't always at home since the boys went to school and that. Not to the degree where if this friend left the same city I'm living in and moved away it would destroy me or anything. Not that desperate a need. But love to see them come and visit me. Like the woman that died there three years ago, Mrs.Wangley. She was a dear, dear friend, but it didn't destroy me when she moved to Grande Prairie. Friends meant a lot to me but if they left or moved away or I didn't see them for long periods of time, I

could sustain my own self. I didn't need them constantly at my side. And if they left and made friends with somebody else, it didn't destroy me. It didn't fill my life to the extent that I needed them constantly. Or if they became friends with somebody else it didn't bother me. I guess, like I said, because of the activity of my life. I made my own life, my own surroundings, very interesting for myself. And I was always looking forward to the next day for whatever I was going to do, whatever I had to do. For some people their friends are everything whereas for me a good friend was something but not my whole life. I value friends, yes, they're necessary, but you can go for long, long periods of time, as far as I'm concerned, if you're busy doing something and everything and you're very interested in what you're doing, without seeing anyone on a daily basis. I don't know how other people are on the phone or that; I'm never on the phone for long periods of time at all. Maybe my sister at the most. I just never went into that so much. But I suppose there wasn't the need. And some people probably have their needs for friends more. I came from a big family too, that could explain a lot – brothers and sisters. We're very close and we're all in the city, so that could make a big difference that I'm not conscious of. I had friends, but they weren't a dire necessity of my life. I like friends, visiting certain people and everything, but I could go six months without seeing them and it wouldn't change my life. But brothers and sisters, we're in contact over the telephone very often. How are we and what are we doing, and get together through the festive seasons at each other's homes and that. But we all sort of know we're there, if anyone needed someone. A brother and sister is there, which could make quite a difference to a person in the city. Whereas if all my family was in Toronto, I would probably have much closer friends and be in contact with certain people a lot more, because of the lack of family.

Denise values, too, that she never gets bored – that she takes pleasure in life and enjoys working and being active. She wonders about fate and chance, feeling lucky to have the life she has.

And I value the fact too – I don't know if it's value or appreciation – that things can make me happy. Making a doll's dress for my grandaughter gives me a great deal of pleasure. Seeing somebody happy receiving a gift I made, I like that. I value that I care that this makes me happy. It's something to continue on, rather than just feel blah, and do nothing. I don't know quite how to explain it other than I like that. I'm glad I've got it. Rather than feel bored. Like I'm never bored and that I value very much. I'm never bored! I can't think of sitting around and saying, 'What a boring day,' or 'I'm so bored!' I hear people say that and I wonder why. They've got two hands, they've got a mind, they've got something. Make yourself do it if it takes an hour. After you're through you're not bored. You'll have done something. I'm glad that I have that. I value that, to be able to pull out of boredom or enjoy doing something. I guess I enjoy life, is what it amounts to. Being able to enjoy life and get enjoyment out of creating or doing something. And look forward when you get up, 'Oh, I've got this to do today.' Go to bed at night and think, 'Oh, I've got this little pattern to cut out.' And you feel nice and warm and you go to sleep because you know the next day you're going to so look forward to getting it done. I don't know if that's a value or an appreciation, but I'm so happy that I've got that. Because some people get so depressed. What I mean to say, it's passing me by but I don't know why. It's passing me by. I could be the depressed person and the next person could be the gay person. And it always comes back to the original. 'Why me?' Or a cripple goes down the street and I often say, 'There but for the grace of God go I.' And you feel for them. So I value, appreciation I guess, the love of life. Like life is good no matter. The bumps are there and the heartaches and everything. But what gave me this knowledge when I lost my husband – the hope and knowledge and the knowing that in times the pain would go? Who gave it to me? And somebody else would just go flop and who knows, maybe drink or do something and just try to get rid of the pain. Where did I get this feeling

> of letting the pain be, and feeling it and living it, right from the pit of the stomach, and really feeling it and living it. and I didn't used to send it away; I used to let it seep into me, and then it seemed to work from the inside outwards. Who gave that to me? Not me! You know what I mean? I consider myself lucky. I don't know if that makes any sense. Because it could have been otherwise. I consider it good fortune I guess.
> Like I said, the ability to be able to do things for myself and the liking to do them. The enjoying of doing and working is, I think, a good thing – to be able to enjoy being able to work rather than not.

Denise also values her honesty, explaining that she learned from her parents to be fair and honest, both by their teaching and by their example. She believes that she benefits from being honest because honesty builds trust between herself and others. Further, being honest means that she gains self-respect, knowing that she does not benefit from hurting others.

> I suppose I also value my honesty. I find myself lucky that I don't have a great drive of cheating people or getting anything I can out of something or somebody. I have no desire to charge somebody $10 for something that's worth two, and good if I get eight, I made it. I'm glad that I'm honest; I hope I am, that is, in all things. And I value that I have that direction. I have no great desire to cheat anybody or take advantage of someone. I value that very much. And I find that, again, is a bit of luck. Those who do that, they don't think they're doing wrong. They don't. So I say I'm lucky because I appreciate the fact that I would rather give them more than I take from them. I feel better about it than taking more from them and thinking, 'Fine! They gave me too much. Too bad! That's to my benefit and their tough luck.' But I find that other people, that it doesn't bother them. If something's worth five dollars and they can get 10, good, five dollars to the credit and they're happy about it. But I'm glad I'm not. I'm like the Good Samaritan I guess, or the Samaritan and the sinner in a way. It was the sinner that was the better one, who asked forgiveness; where the other one said, 'I'm glad you didn't make me like him.' So that's not what I'm trying to say. I find it luck that you have a quality that you don't cheat people or something of value. Being honest! Like I can tell the truth. I don't have to be scared of it and I don't like lying and things like that. I would say that that came from my parents. They instilled it in us from the time we were one year old. That you gave every value its just dues. You didn't have to give a whole lot more but you gave justice, number one, 'justice.' To my father that was one of his favorite little words, justice. Not honesty so much but justice. If a person deserves something and it happened to be a punishment or something, if it was a just punishment – if the person had deliberately done something and he deserved being punished and the punishment was just punishment, then so be it, if that was the way it was. His other word was 'honesty.' He was a very just and a very fair person. Being honest I think you feel within yourself. You feel that you're giving your family and friends a good sense of values and security. They know if Mom said she didn't do this or won't do this, or if she say goes someplace and this happened or that happened, if they know you're honest they feel good because they know it's the truth. It's not likely to come and slap them in the face by someone six weeks down the road, 'Your mom did this and that, that night or that day,' and it really hurts. They know that if Mom said it and this person is saying it, they're making it up. 'Because my mom said this and that's the way it is,' and they are sure of themselves. It builds trust. And even in stores, honesty. How many times have I been given too much change, up to $20 sometimes, by a cashier who was tired or a new personnel or something, and I looked at it and said, 'You've made a mistake.' And the person is so glad that you brought it to their attention and they'll say right out, 'You're sure honest. There's not many people like that. They would have gone out and I'd have been in trouble tonight.' And you feel good that you

didn't deny that person that one good night at home or something. That they were on the carpet that night with the boss or something, and you feel good and you don't want something like that to belong to you.

Denise described several examples demonstrating her sons' and her own honesty in incidents regarding money, explaining that they reaped personal rewards for their honest behavior.

Like my son one time, the one that's teaching now and he's a principal – it was textbook rental time with brown envelopes. The children were going to school and it was three for elementary, five dollars for junior high and probably seven or 10 in those days for high school. He was crossing through the intersection coming home on 156th Street and this brown envelope was lying on the street. And he immediately knew that it was the textbook rental envelope, because he'd taken his own to the school that day. So he brought it home. And I knew immediately too what it was because the schools had all stamped them out and they all looked alike. And I said, 'You know this is textbook rental for some family for some school, but there's no name, there's nothing on it. What do you do?' He said, 'Well Mom, in this instance – he was about 12 – there's nothing we can do. It's opening up a letter that's sealed, but it's the only way we're going to find out who it belongs to and go and give it to them.' So I said, 'Well, you're so right. We can't just keep it sealed in the house. We've got to find out who it belongs to.' So we slit it with a knife, found out the address of the people and everything, and it wasn't too far from home – about 10 blocks. And it was supper time by this time and I put the baby – he would have been about two I guess, the young one that's in Toronto now, he was talking anyway and could be aware of what was going on, maybe closer to three – and we got to this little house. It was being built, it was fairly new; and they were sitting in the kitchen and there was a young mother there and two or three little children and one about six. We walked in and said, 'We found this on the street and I'm sorry we had to open it but there was no other way we could find out who it belonged to.' And the mother just sat there and she just put her face in her hands and the tears were just streaming down her face. She said, 'You know, we just bought this lot. My husband is building this house and it was our last seven dollars for his books. So we'd have to go down another seven which we didn't have. It would have been fourteen dollars. And what kind of people are you to bring this back to us?' 'Well,' I said, 'lady, we're only too happy. It belongs to you and your little boy. You've got to buy his books.' And she said, 'There's just no one left in the world.' I said, 'Oh yes there is. There's lots of people that are honest. My son was only too happy.' She said, 'Well we'll give him a dollar.' I said, 'No. He doesn't need a dollar to be honest. Seeing you here and seeing the situation of how much this means to you is reward enough.' So being honest does give you a great feeling. I think. And then in another instance he bought a pair of shoes. He was about 16 and the shoes were about nine dollars and it was pouring rain and we went to Meadowlark. We left him at the shoe shop while we went off to get the groceries. And he said, 'I'll walk back home.' But in the meantime it started pouring rain. But he walked back home anyway. But he had left home with $10, the shoes were nine, because we'd seen them the day before, and he came back home and he had six dollars in his wallet. And he said to himself, 'There's no way this five dollar bill belongs to me.' He had had nothing extra in his wallet. The store gave him the one on the ten and an extra five. He walked back in the rain and gave it to the store, to the clerk, and said, 'You've made a mistake. You gave me five dollars too much.' And she said, 'I have never seen this in my whole life.' Looking at about a 15 or 16 year old boy she says, 'I'm going to call the manager and tell him.' And he said, 'Oh no, that's okay. You made a mistake and here's your five dollars. I know because my parents gave me exactly ten and I should just have had a one.' And he just never thought to check it, but when he got home he was going to give me my one dollar and there was a five. He said, 'You know, it's

> rewarding enough when you see that people really appreciate honesty.'. And it stayed with them all their lives. So it's a good inner feeling. There's insurances in the stores and everything, but I've had it come back to me too. When Don was getting married – the oldest son – I went to buy something for the wedding. And you know when we came into the new twenties and they were just like the ones. And I bought something and I guess I must have given two twenties instead of twenty–one, whatever I was buying. However, it turned out. I was walking down the mall and this person was running after me. She said, 'You gave me twenty dollars too much.' 'Well,' I said, 'Thanks a million! I'm kind of in a hurry; the wedding is tomorrow and I had these little things to pick up.' Those new ones or twenties were so confusing you pretty near had to turn them over. And I was very appreciative. So it kind of comes back to you. Oh, once in awhile it doesn't, but you just have to kind of forget about it. So I value honesty very much.

That Denise indeed values the strengths she has developed and has a sense of power in being able to cope with difficulties and resolve her past hurts is evidenced by her statement that she has no regrets. Asked, "What do you regret or resent in your life?" she responded:

> Nothing, really. To be very honest with you, I don't regret anything – seriously regret anything – that I have done or not done. Really nothing, to tell you the honest truth. I've often thought if I was reliving my life all over again, it would probably be very, very much the same keel. There wouldn't be too much that I would change. I just can't think of anything that – I really have none. Not any big, big regrets. Maybe, I don't know. I really can't think of anything serious that I would change.

Denise did give an example of something she resents, however – the insinuation by another woman that because she is independent and strong, she can be criticized, she is 'the boss of the house.'

> Not really resentments either. Not more than just the daily little things that somebody might have said. Like my sister–in–law a few weeks ago, my husband's brother's wife, he was married twice – and they don't have a house; they just have a little apartment. He's not very aggressive in that sense. Like Van had to have a nice home and everything and we both worked hard for it. But she said that I was the boss of the house. And I laughed hilariously, because there's no real boss and I'm not the boss. I mean Van, we decide things together and everything. I resented that she said it, but not that kind of resentment. Those kind of things. I felt, 'Why did she have to say that? How does she know who's boss?' And then I forgot about it instantly, knowing where it came from. Little resentments like that that come along daily, or some resentment somebody might say or something. Or if somebody says something to me, like any human conversation, someone might say, 'Oh, you didn't do that,' or 'You didn't do that very well,' or 'You did it and forgot.' I might resent them saying it, but it's such a menial and everydayish thing. I don't have any big resentments at all. Not at all.

In speaking above about what she values in herself, Denise considered herself to be "lucky." This sense of not being entirely responsible for her good fortune and life circumstance is discussed in greater depth in her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" Denise explains that she values that she has a warm, comfortable home that is secure, but feels she cannot take all of the credit for having accomplished

this. Aware that other people do not have the comforts she has, she recognizes that her own circumstances could have been different, and she feels humble and grateful for what she has.

> And having the comforts of a warm home, well, to me it means that in some ways you have to recognize that there is something, either God or whatever people want to call the being, the super being that's up there. You simply all of a sudden recognize, 'How come it's me and not someone else?' Like I have this place and I'm comfortable and things go on fairly peacefully every day. You sew something for a child in your warm home and you get a real lift and a loving feeling and you're happy to give it. Why is the next person so unhappy and by what circumstances in their life did they come about to have not enough to eat, suffering? And here I am. And you really question and you're really grateful, but you don't give yourself the full credit because it could have missed you. And it keeps you sort of in line for being thankful to someone for something – that you didn't get there alone, because you're no better than maybe the poor fellow on 101 Street. But at what point did his life turn around? And it might have been you. And you really have sympathy for him. And you sit in your warm home and wonder, 'At what point did his life get turned around? By what circumstances did he get there?' And you have been fortunate enough that it missed you. And you feel so cozy and warm inside. But yet you feel that you are very fortunate; that it didn't all come through you alone; that there must be something that has a design in life; that you've done something right by whatever means because here you are and there they are. And sometimes you just value the comfort and the love and everything that's around you. And it's almost frightening to think that it could all have missed you, but by what reason or circumstance? It's security, but security with a gratefulness that you didn't do it alone. Some place, some place, there was an incentive and a drive there that you could have missed. And you appreciate it every day and you're thankful to someone. At this point you value it and you're not really envious of anyone. Or you don't think, 'Well, because I did such and such. If they had done this or if someone else had done that, they'd be here.' You don't even think that way. You think how fortunate you are that things turned out the way they did, and that you might have failed along the way, but that something, somewhere kept you on that certain road. And you feel very fortunate. And in some sense, very humble. Because I'm sure some people are where they are, not by choice, but by a certain set of circumstances. And they're missing it and you really feel sorry for them. You wonder how you got through some 60 years like this. And that you've gone through heartaches and pain and everything, but that you stayed on the right temperament and everything, not to just go all away, unconsciously lose it all. And you're very grateful. And you help other people when you can, naturally. You feel you should share. Of course home is a special kind of a place. It's the cradle of civilization, isn't it? Every home is like a cradle, isn't it? Out of that cradle should come the future generation. And if there's good in that home, they will go out into the world and project it out again. And you hope that maybe the home is the most important thing really, for people to get their basic strength from. Small children and that. It follows through pretty good. It's an old story, but sometimes you're much like your parents but in some areas not. Because you become an adult and maybe your parents weren't right – all parents are not perfect. And you do it different, and for the better in some cases.

Denise clarifies that it is not material things per se (her house) that she values. Rather, she values the closeness and love of her family that she finds in her home, the comfort and security she experiences there, the privacy and freedom which her home allows her, and the pleasure she takes in caring for her own place.

I don't value material things in the sense that I get attached. Say if we had to sell this house and move someplace else, I would just go and I wouldn't attach. I would hate to leave, but I don't attach foreverness to material things. It's here today and gone tomorrow. I value my family very much. My little grandchildren and my husband and my children. If we're together around the table or anything, we enjoy ourselves and loving one another, and laugh at each other's little mistakes or spills or something. I value that very much. That closeness and love. To be able to have them around. I feel like that if they're ever feeling really bad, or anything should happen, I feel good that they could come here and be well accepted and know that they'd get some comfort here, rather than knowing, 'Oh, what's the use of coming home. We wouldn't get any help there anyway.' I value the fact that I can help them and I make them feel better. And to help them to carry on a little bit further and then to get up on their own again. I value that, the love with them. I guess it all comes down to like they said for many hundreds of years, 'It's love!' Without it you wouldn't exist, would you? It would be pretty empty. But I guess that's about it for a home. It's a place, it's sort of secure and you do more or less as you wish. If you're in somebody else's home, you don't feel as free and comfortable as in your own, do you? And I think that's the same with everyone. And it's such a bond. Home is where the heart is, where your loved ones are to be. A house, it could be anything. As long as your loved ones are there, I guess that's the idea of home. But not to be dependent on anyone. As you get older you don't want to be in someone's way so they can't live their own lives freely. That's coming from an older person's point of view. Even when I was young I didn't like to be in someone else's home because I felt that I was intruding on their freedom and privacy. It shows that we're very private. All people have a very private section, and the home is where I guess you can enjoy it the most, when you come right down to it. I love the outdoors, flowerbeds, trees, lawn, working outdoors. I just love it but I suppose that's been said many times. I would miss that if I lived in an apartment and had no yard, but that's probably been said too many times. It's a great feeling that you can arrange the way you want, do what you want. It's home!
So at this point in time I value good health, love of my children and their respect and their consideration, and a sort of a warm contentment of having a good home that's warm.

Above Denise spoke of not having any regrets about her life. However, she is able to look back over her past and discuss her faults and how she tried to change them. She talks about previously having been rigid about what was right or wrong, explaining that the principal (a male) at the school where she worked taught her to be more flexible and less judgmental.

I was too – it wouldn't be called biased, but it would be called unflexible. Wrong was wrong and right was right, and there was no inbetween. Well thank goodness for having worked in the school where I worked with the principal I worked with. He softened many of that and made me see that I could not be what you call wrong, but I was too stiff and rigid on certain ideas. I had to soften and flex. That I could be actually wrong and proven wrong, given two or three weeks of an incident with a student. That to me I would have said, 'Expel him from school! That's it! I have a standard in my school and that's it!' No. Three weeks down the road that student was still there and we were acquainted better. I had spoken to the student; I had found out his ideas and his opinions through conversation and getting acquainted and I found out nobody should ever – it's just not the thing to do. But at that point I had only a certain standard and, 'If you can't live up to the standard of my school, you might as well go find yourself another school.' I was working in a school, okay. But I found out that no, that is wrong – wrong because you would only have one type of school and only one kind of

> student come out of it. And you'd have a stereotype process going on in that building. They would go out and they would be this way and never give in or change anything. And they'd be pretty hard people to deal with in some areas if they had the wrong idea – only one standard in their head. And if they became politicians or a lawyer or anything there isn't a thing in the world that could change them. They'd put that idea across and they just might be very harmful in some situations. So in that way I becames much more flexible and saw into a situation before I completely condemned it, or completely put a category on it – 'That's wrong and there's no way.'

Asked, "What do you dislike about yourself?", Denise speaks briefly about speaking at the wrong time and about being impatient.

> I would like sometimes – I've learned and it took many years – I don't dislike it but it took me years and years to develop it – not to speak at the wrong time. Like to speak for someone else. Say somebody's sitting in a room – and I used to do it with my children and I dislike it in myself after I recognized it – someone would ask them something and I'd answer for them. And I dislike that. I thought, 'Next time I'm just going to let them do their own answering.' So it probably would be in some areas, being able to keep quiet and not talk at the wrong time. If somebody is asked an opinion, let them give it and stay right out of it unless you're asked. But the impulse to give my opinion was always there too. All people are like that. Men, some of them, even more than women. But that was one thing. And about myself, yes, I didn't used to have as much patience as I could and I developed it. Like temper. Well, that's pretty normal. Some people are passive, very calm, or more quiet and have a more nice temperament than I have. And that I would like to have. I dislike being impulsive and quick. I quite often wish I hadn't said what I did. That's about the only thing I can think of. But I'm getting there. It takes a long time. But that's about it I guess. You know, I can't think of anything else about myself. I wish I had more hair.

Denise speaks in greater depth about these issues in answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?" She defines power as an unconscious inner struggle to manipulate or control others – a power *over* others which she judges to be negative. Comparing the power struggle she perceives in politicians' maneouvering with the struggle she has experienced with her children, she describes how she has tried to overcome this force and wishes that politicians would overcome it too.

> Terrible! It took me a long time to recognize and I have finally. It clicked in one day, I don't know when, that we all have this inner power struggle. We want to rule the other fellow. And if they don't do things the way we would like it done we criticize it or wish we did it ourselves. Or 'Why does he always do this this way, or she do this?' And suddenly you stop right there and you think, 'Their way is as good as my way; I just want to rule this person.' Not rule, but an inner power struggle that we have within ourselves to be manipulating or telling or making the other person do it your way – how you like it or else! And it's there in all of us and we practically destroy enjoying ourselves or enjoying that person because they are doing things different than we wanted them to do it. We tried so hard to change them. Unconsciously we have it inside ourselves until we recognize it. I didn't like it. I used to do that. In building, in driving a car, in just most anything. I always felt they weren't doing it right, and it would annoy me. And I would either say so or say nothing. But I don't know when it clicked in that that is an inner power struggle in a person. Just because the other person doesn't do things

the way you do, you don't think they're doing it right, and you'd like to make them do it the other way. It's in all of us. In our life over our husband, a husband over a wife, a child over a child – it's in everybody. And I think it clicked in a few years ago. I was washing the dishes and there was an election going on and it just kind of all clicked in like a jigsaw puzzle. These two politicians – and I thought, 'All those two are striving for is not to better the country, not to better the citizens of that country, but each one of them is just struggling to have the power to run the things the way they want to, whether they're right or wrong.' And I thought, 'Ye Gods! We're all the same! I've done it to my own husband. I've done it with my children. I have the same power struggle inside of me and I didn't know it!' It just kind of clicked in and I stopped doing it. I stopped doing it! It's of course using a small example – if a patio was swept and a corner missed and the chairs weren't set up right, it didn't bother me anymore. I thought, 'They've done it their way, they like it, they're pleased and they're happy with the job they did. 'Look Mom!' And instead of going out and saying, 'You missed a corner. Put the chairs this way,' I thought, 'That way I'm destroying them. They're happy, they think they've done a great thing and it looks lovely. Just don't look at the corners. Quit this power thing that it's got to be your way!' And I was so pleased! And I don't know how it clicked in but it really stuck to me. Even with your bosses, with your fellow workers, with just anything. You don't give them a compliment or praise them for what they've done. You just decide, 'Big deal! They didn't do it very darn good. I could have done it better.' Stop doing it! Praise them! They have done it to the best of their ability and they're pleased with it. So it isn't *your* way. Maybe it's a better way in the final analysis. And it's such a salvation of the system and a peace inside of yourself. Suddenly you just let other people live their own way. It's *their* way. And I was so pleased that it clicked in, but I don't know from where or from why. I was glad it did. Before I used to worry about my son packing his suitcases to Toronto – packing his suitcases when he went to school. It would be five o'clock at night, the plane would be leaving at seven o'clock the next morning, and there wasn't a thing in the suitcases. And I didn't say one word. Five o'clock the alarm would ring, the suitcases were at the door, the briefcase, everything, just as clean as a whistle and he was on the plane and I hadn't lifted a finger or said a word. And I thought, "There you are, lady! You'd have become one, 'Get that suitcase packed! You're going to be late!' This, that and the other thing. This little power struggle, 'Get with it, do it my way, and have it ready at six o'clock tonight in stead of 10.' " In his room, in the suitcases, everything organized, suitcases at the door, briefcase – and he was watching TV and everything was done and I hadn't opened my mouth. And I thought, 'Good! How wonderful that I have given him credit that he can do something on his own without me.' That 'I should be there doing it, packing his suitcases and everything, he'll never be ready' – it just left me, and it was such a beautiful feeling. Inner power struggle to rule the other fellow! Your way within your hour within your time, or it won't work! And it does work! And sometimes better! It's a great feeling! And we all have it!

Power! It's not a good thing to have if you use it to rule the other person. It's a good thing to have if they need you and it's all sorted out in your mind what you would do and they suddenly say, 'How would you do this?' or, 'Would you help me with this?' Great! Cooperation! Like two politicians sitting across, trying to save Canada. And one of them says, 'There is no Goddarn way I'm going to do it your way.' 'And there's no way I'm going to do it your way.' Why not bring the two heads together and say, 'Look, we're doing this for the good of the country. If your idea is good, I'm willing to use it. And the same with this. I'm not going to be bigger than you and run it my way and just smash you to the ground.' Get the heads together and 'If you've got a good idea bring it. We're going to put it into this and make it work. Let's try it, for the betterment of it.' Release the tightening there of the reins there – 'I'm going to do it my way because I know it's right' – forget it! Maybe it isn't right. Give other people a chance.

As she continues to speak about power, Denise recognizes that it can be either

destructive or positive. She gives an example of a friend's experience with the negative use of power, explaining that after 20 years her friend still resents her lack of choice.

> Power can be destructive or it can be very positive. But the person that you're trying to rule or whatever – well, a friend of mine told me just last night that there's one thing she resents in her marriage. It's the day they were married for whatever, 19, 20 years, that she still resents. And I thought, 'My gosh! For 20 years you've resented something since your wedding day! What is it?' She said, 'Stan told me I was going to get married in his church or I wouldn't marry him at all, and I married him.' She said, 'I wish I'd never met him. I wish I'd had my chance to choose.' And that to me was a good example. He had the power over her and he made her do what he wanted her to do. And at the time she was young and everything, but she has resented it ever since. It's probably worked in some negative ways for 20 years. She's definitely not happy about this. So why not have got together, the two of them, and she could have said – when you're young you don't – said, 'Well, all right. Why? Why? Can we not come to a compromise? Or can I do something for you, you do something for me, to make up the difference?' You know, a 50/50 solution or something, instead of the one person having the final say and 'It's going to be this way and that's it,' and you're happy because you made the other person do it. Have a compromise or a 50/50. Find out how the other person feels and why. Because it just might be that it could turn out wrong if you use that power.

In the discussion that follows, Denise contemplates how trying to change her son's plans to suit her needs would be a negative use of power. On the other hand, giving him advice when he asked for it, because she had the power of authority, knowledge and experience, was a positive use of power.

> Like how often I have thought of, for instance, that there might be a strike on the 19th of this month, December, by the air stewardesses. And I was so tempted to phone my son – he's going to be through school, he's coming home on the 16th but he'll be relatively through with his studies today on the 10th. He'll have maybe one more class and then packing. And I came so close to phoning him and saying, 'Look! Go down to the airport and change those tickets that you have on that plane and come home on the 13th or 14th and miss that strike.' And I thought, 'Oh yeah, Mother! You make him take another plane and how do you know what's going to happen? Leave it and let him decide if he wants to exchange his tickets. He's 23. Maybe he wants to come home on the 16th. Maybe the plane that he's scheduled to take is the plane he must take. Don't change the whole environment of his life because you might regret it. Just leave it alone! He'll do what's best.' It turned out that he's coming home on the 16th and the strike will be on the 19th and not on the 12th. So it all turned out anyway. Don't use the ability – I could have said, 'I would do this' and maybe he would have and then maybe I would have regretted it. So that's what I mean by power. You have the power to change people's lives sometimes and they'll listen to you. But maybe you'll go and do a very wrong thing. Let the situation work itself out since it's that way. If the person changes it on their own, fine. It's because it was meant to be.
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> I can't think of anything just at the moment where I have used power to any degree. Changing anything about anyone. By that I mean a decision or anything, or not letting them do their own way. I haven't had too much experience with that. I think that right now what I would be thinking about is that if anyone came to me for advice, it would be a straightforward choice, 'Should I do this or should I do that?' Which doesn't, to my mind, come into power, does it? It would be more like giving advice or influencing someone. I think of power more as saying, 'You either do it that way or it won't be done at all!' That's what it would mean to me – power. 'Either that way or

> don't do it at all' would be power. And the person who would be delegating out the suggestion would be the one with the power and would be using it. Rightly or wrongly. Just at the moment there I can't think of any other situations where I have. The only thing I can think of, and I don't know if it falls into that category, is that when my son was going away to school he said, 'I wonder if I'm doing the right thing and if after all I have made the right decision?' And I said, 'You are going. You're not turning back. You've always wanted it and no matter what, you will go! And you're going to try this out because if you don't you'll always regret that you didn't. You will always think of it and always say, "Maybe I should have gone. I wish I had gone." 'So in that way I did say that time, 'You are going if I have to pay the flight or the price of the education or whatever it is. You are going to try it out because you have been talking about it for say five years, and you're not just backing off now.' That was more encouragement, I would say, in a very definite way. I insisted that he not change his mind and that he go. Which is what he was looking for. Kind of a push. I don't know if that's power, you see. I simply said that no way, as far as I was concerned, when he changed his mind. Because, well, you know, I said, 'You've always wanted it. At this point anyone would stop and think twice, "Should I or shouldn't I?" or "Have I made the wrong move?" You'll never know until you go. As far as I'm concerned you're going. Don't turn back. Don't think about it.' I'm glad that he did, you know. It turned out for the best. But other than that in power, I can't think of having used it in any degree. Because power over anyone else, somehow you just don't have. You may want to have it but very seldom can you make anybody do something they really don't want to do. Maybe a child, which you shouldn't do either, unless it's for their own good. The power to use your own good judgment and your good will.

Denise next considers the positive effects of personal power – being able to motivate herself, being strong enough to persevere through difficult times, being able to analyze her problems and put them in perspective, and being confident in her decisions and behavior. Clarifying that she has never had power *over* anyone, she concludes that she has experienced power in the sense of being able to control her own life.

> I guess there's also having a power in your own life, to a degree. I suppose it starts with motivation. You motivate yourself to do a certain thing. A common sense knowing it is the right thing, even though it's hard to do. You just make yourself do it and you feel better. You're strong enough not to just give in to weaknesses or anything. You just know that you're doing a good thing, that it better be done and you have the power over yourself to say, 'This is it! I'm going to do it!' In a good way, in a good constructive way. Well, I suppose you could even use a job or anything. Not giving up a good job. You have the power over yourself to make yourself see sense, that if you've got a good job, you know you seem tired of it and everything, that it is good. And the next one, you'll run into the same wanting to leave it maybe six months or a year later anyways. So you just have the power over yourself to just go ahead and motivate yourself to do it and keep going. And also not letting yourself also probably get depressed or anything. Or things that you have the power with your mind – sort it out and analyze it and put it in its right perspective if there's problems, and things like that. If you consider that falls into power. When my first husband died I stayed home maybe one or two days. And I just made myself get up and go to work because I knew that the longer I sat at home – really, just sitting there in sort of a cocoon – that I would be no good to myself or anyone else. I just went to work and went through my days, and just really had to work hard to do it, but I made myself do it, daily by daily. And then I kept getting stronger all the time and I found that it was much easier than just letting myself go at home. I had the power over myself then to just know that it was better for my mind and everything to just keep going. That's about the only thing I can think of.

> It's kind of difficult because when I have felt powerful, I have felt at times that I was fortunate to be strong and confident of what I was doing. And being able, when I was thinking out in a decision or something, to give up something, that I had the strength to do it. I don't know if that's considered power. To will myself to, especially in grief or anything, that this will pass. I had the power to tell myself that it will not last forever, if that is what you consider power. I had the ability to – I think I would probably refer to it more as strength, but I suppose it is power of the mind to give yourself strength. That's a part of power. Mind power, would you say? That's what I'm thinking of now anyway. I have the mind power to motivate myself to go ahead and do it, do things and keep going. But I don't know if that's sufficient for power. I've never felt powerful in the way that I had power over anyone else or anything. I don't use that word much.

Although Denise tends to not use the word 'power' in a positive, personal sense, she does take action on behalf of others and herself. The following is an example of how she stood her ground in the face of authority – a school principal who wanted to pressure her son to achieve.

> I had to stand my ground with the principal about my younger son. When he was in the elementary grades they wanted him to achieve more and get higher marks, and I couldn't understand that, because I thought he was doing fine. He got say, 75 percent; he was a happy child, well-adjusted. But the teachers were always after me, 'He could do better, he could do better.' And they were always after me but I never really understood why because I wasn't in the school and I felt he was doing fine. He was happy and I didn't drive him to doing better because I figured he would become unhappy and maybe restless and nervous. So I just kind of left him be a happy child. Until I went to work with the school, and he was by that time in about grade six or seven. And the principal called me in the office one day and said that he was quite disappointed that my son wasn't getting higher marks. And I confronted him with I wanted an explanation from him, once for all, why a lot of teachers had been after me about this child, saying that he could do better and that he was wasting his time in school. And I said that I couldn't see that. He did his homework and did his assignments and got fairly good marks, 70 to 75, which I thought were quite good. And the principal insisted that he could get 90 or 100 quite easily if he would apply himself. So I said, 'Fine! Explain that to me.' He said, 'Okay, look here,' and he pulled out his records and he said, 'He has an IQ of 145.' And I said, 'That doesn't mean anything to me. You'll have to explain.' Well he said he could with a little effort get a 95 to 100 all the time. I said that it didn't mean anything to me; that I'd rather have a happy, well-adjusted child that was accomplishing 75 to 80 and living a happy life, being a normal, happy child that wasn't striving for a goal of 100 and being restless and nervous. And that I wasn't going to do anything about it. I was going to let him mature on his own and eventually reach that potential when he could recognize it himself, rather than making him unhappy and that. The principal said, 'Well, you know, I think you're right. Maybe pushing children and bringing them under too much pressure could hurt him. And you're right. Someday maybe he will just achieve this and do it on his own. I guess I'm going to back off and agree with you, and tell the teachers that they don't need to think that some of the students that are brilliant are going to hold up their class average. That's probably what they're looking for in some of these more brilliant students. And just to let them happily achieve their marks. And if they're doing well in the 75's or so, to compliment them on it and let them be happy, well-adjusted people. Maybe we put too much pressure on students.' Then he grew up and he's doing it now. He's achieving high marks in the field he's in, and he likes it. So it pays off not to put too much pressure on your children. And it also pays off to say what you believe is right. That principal realized that maybe there was something there to be said about putting pressure on students, and that he was doing fine. Let him be

> happy and not try to change his lifestyle. If he had one nature, maybe he should live with it rather than try to reroute him into an electrical genius or something. That's the way it went and he got through grade 12 very well. He got very good marks and he remained a well-adjusted person. Teachers can put too much pressure on your children. That's true too, you know. I've seen it with those who can't achieve and cannot reach it. They have been put under so much pressure that they dropped out of school. Under pressure! Which is an old story you've heard many times, I'm sure.

Finally, Denise considers power in the public sense of affecting change in laws, for example – a power she does not experience. She reflects on the definition of power and her inclination to not think of the word in a positive, personal sense.

> It's hard to say, to define the word, 'powerful'. To define the word, 'powerful', would be a person in a powerful position, able to change anything in the world or anything, make new laws or anything. I never think of myself as that. Not really. But I have thought of it more as ability to school your own mind, to control your own emotions and things and not let them get away on you and just become depressed over things. I have felt that I have the power of the mind to rule myself, I hope, to a better situation, more constructive. But I don't personally think of that as a power. Well, I suppose some people say it takes a lot of power to do this or a lot of power to do that. I feel that if I want to do something, if I want to accomplish something, I will do it and I will complete it and I'll struggle over and over until I get it. I suppose that is rightly power over your own mind to make yourself do it. I think that's a good use for power. I would have that. But I don't know if that's the right connotation.

While tending not to think in terms of personal power, Denise's first reaction to the world "powerless," was on the personal level. In answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?", she replys that she has never felt completely powerless – she can always speak out to try to affect change. She differentiates again between power *over* others and personal power to be or do.

> None! Well by powerless I mean powerless completely. None! I would say that I have had the power to – if someone comes to me and asks, 'What do you think of this? How would you do it?' – I have had I suppose the power to speak out, to give them exactly what I think of it and the outcome of it, and why they should change a certain thing, that it just might not turn out right. I have been able to motivate people into a different sort of decision which I felt was for the better. And it did turn out for the better. But I can't think just right at the moment of a particular experience. I just can't think of anything at the moment, of anybody's life that I would have changed or directed, but possibly made them think more deeply or redirect their decision. I don't know – I don't feel myself as powerless, completely. There's many words to power, isn't there? He has the power to do this, or he has the power to do that. I suppose I always think of it more as strength.
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> But powerless! Someone who just can't do a certain thing, who has no power over their lives, or control of the inner. Like they say, there are two people inside of everybody, a child and an adult. And I would think of a person who has no power to control the childish within you, because there's a parent and a child within everybody. Maturity and that child are always there. And I would think of a person who does all sorts of things that are very immature, and that what they are doing is not nearly as constructive if they sort of let the immaturity in them rule them all the time. I think that the person is powerless to change things in their own lives. If they never even try, then they're powerless. They don't have whatever it takes to make some

> things clear enough to somebody. Because I think that is the better way to go, and the more secure way. If they don't think they have the ability to show that and prove it, they 're powerless to change anything.
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> I myself don't feel powerless. No. No. I don't feel powerless. Uh-huh. Not completely powerless. I certainly wouldn't consider myself powerless. But you see, I've never used power to that degree that I have insisted on anything being changed to my way, 'or else' kind of thing. I've stood up to people. Very much. Very much. Yes. But that wasn't having power over them. That was just standing up for yourself. But to go out and know that I could change a piece of legislature or something that's going through public life or city hall or even in a school board or something, I don't have the power to walk in and tell them, 'I would like this changed. This is the way it should be.' I don't have the power to change it because either they wouldn't listen to me or they wouldn't want to. To be able to walk in and say, 'Listen, let's change this. That's wrong and it will work better this way.' I don't feel that I have that power. But I don't feel powerless. No. No. No. In very, very strong situations that I've been at point blank in school, and they have really wanted an honest answer and say, 'Would you change this policy we have in this certain school to this instead of this? It doesn't seem to be working out.' And I have said, 'Yes', in a couple of situations, 'yes, definitely I would change it. I don't think it's working out.' And they used my information. Now I don't know if that could be considered power, but it did work out better. But to say I could go and tell someone, 'I want you to do this; I want you to do it this way and there's no two ways around it' - I don't have that power. I can try to have it, but I don't have the *right* to have that power.

Speaking earlier of her faults, Denise explained that she had learned to be more flexible in her attitudes. There are issues, however, that Denise maintains cannot be viewed with the same flexibility. One of these is abortion. She explains that she perceives abortion as destroying life and believes this is not right. However, she does see a definite need for birth control, having witnessed her sister being unable to leave an alcoholic husband because she had too many children to support.

> Now there are certain things, as far as I'm concerned, you cannot change them. In my view they are there and nothing in this world will ever change it. Like abortion. That's one thing that there is no way that anyone will ever change my opinion on that. My opinion is that you're destroying a child and you've no right to. You pull a rose out of the ground and you pull a rose out of the ground; you destroy a conception and you're destroying a child. You and I wouldn't be sitting here today if we had been aborted. And that will never change in my view. Birth control I accept. That is totally necessary. Totally necessary! I think birth control probably I've accepted from a long time back, probably 30 years. Because of seeing my sister have seven children and suffering so much by having to live with an alcoholic, who never mistreated her, but such a terrible life! If she had had one child she could have left him, but she couldn't leave and support seven. So I accept birth control as such. Control the numbers in families - family planning. I don't think that a woman should just be completely pregnant all the time. To me it's not right. I don't think she was meant to have 15 or 20 children, which some women did 50 to 60 years ago. I think that she's a right to her body, to be free for four or five years at a time to dress as she pleases, go where she pleases. Because pregnancy for nine months - you can only do so much or do certain things, and it can become very cumbersome and very depressing. So in that respect, yeah. And I don't think that pregnancy should be almost forced onto them. Like in our day, in my mother's day, there was no choice. You either did absolutely nothing sexually or you became pregnant every year. And they didn't give you an out. It was wrong! Which to this day, I dislike the total whole idea! I think it was all thought up by men! I really do! All the

> ministers were men, all the priests were men, the bishop, the archbishop, the pope, everybody! You just couldn't prevent childbirth. I don't think that God meant to procreate every nine months. No! I believe in family planning and birth control. Not to the degree of hurting your health or with methods that could hurt your health though. We all know that there are some methods that could be medically unfeasible and cause more damage to a woman's body than having a child. But as for abortion, you see to me you are destroying life from the moment of conception. Left alone it will be a full human being, and you can't wash it down the drain. It is there and that's it! A lot of people say that up to three months the fetus is nothing. Within a week or ten days it has already begun to take on the physical – it's been shown on television and all over now with these X-ray machines and everything, that within a month there are physical features there. You are destroying a human being. Let's face it!

Denise goes on to explain that in a situation where the life of a pregnant woman is at stake, she would look to the medical profession rather than the church for an answer. This does not mean that she has an unquestioning respect for the medical profession, however – they too, she believes, are imperfect human beings.

> Now in medical circumstances, where they can prove that it is not going to be healthy or right – and they can almost do it now – what the medical world does is their own conscience. Because it's such a studied field. But I would never approve of it. When it comes to choosing whose life to save, my position would be: if the child is not going to live anyway and the mother could die, both the mother and child could die, I would say you can't choose life. I mean you can't say, 'I choose that you live and you die.' But if the birth is not going to be a live birth, or if it's not going to be a decent child, or a crippled child, or if she's going to abort it four months up the road anyway, I would say that right now the church's stand is leaving it up to the medical field to do what's best. And it would be I think to save the mother. It's not necessarily what the church says, because most of the leaders are human and the church leaders too. And what I would feel as a woman, a priest or a minister may not feel the same as I do. He's male. But I would say that 95 percent of the medical field are very conscientious people, although they're not rated to be. And a very good medical doctor has spent seven years studying obstetrics and babies and everything, and will do what's right on his own. And possibly will save the mother. I'm trusting some of them because I've been acquainted with one or two cases where it has been touch and go with the mother and child. And from my experience the doctor was very perturbed and very concerned and took a long time to make up his mind. And in the end everything turned out okay. He delayed and delayed and hoped for nature to take its course and it all turned out fine. There was a healthy baby and a mother saved. He didn't want to take a stand, mother or child. He did everything medically to save them both and was lucky and did. In two instances that I know of. But I certainly do not trust all medical people. I trust them but I wouldn't say that they've got the best head on their shoulders in the world, because they are human beings and their ideas could be completely different than mine or yours. They could regret their decision like anyone else. They are not perfect. But I think that most of them do try their best or they wouldn't be there. They would be eliminated fairly soon I think because I think that it is a very strong code with the medical profession. I hope it is.

Denise believes that the fact of being male or female might affect an individual doctor's decision or treatment. She thinks that female doctors, having developed different attitudes and values because of sex-role training, might bring a 'softer feeling' to

medicine. And this perspective is needed, she thinks, to balance the 'tougher' approach of male doctors.

> Thank goodness that there are women doctors that are finally being accepted as really, really good doctors. Because then there's a cross-section of opinion between say four doctors sitting at the table - three male and one is female. They can get help from that female doctor by bringing in the softer view and maybe delaying an opinion or an action of surgery or something long enough that maybe nature takes its course and the whole situation is saved before somebody makes a drastic mistake. So I think the women doctors are greatly needed. Because let's face it, we are what we are and we do have a softer touch and a softer feeling towards a certain situation than men. Men have been unfortunately trained from the time they were little boys to be tougher and harder and not cry and be men, which was all wrong in my opinion. If a man wants to cry he should cry. There's nothing wrong with it. So by having female doctors into the field there's a softening of some opinions there that can prevent something from happening. Like the male doctor saying, 'Well, that's the way it is and it's got to be this way and that's it! Tough! The situation is such and we can't delay it any longer.' Whereas a female doctor might just say, 'Let's just wait a little while. It's okay. The woman won't lose the baby tomorrow or the next day. She's got at least a week or 10 days before we can make this decision.' And suddenly everything rectifies itself and the situation is saved by a softer opinion. That's my feeling about it anyway. I think that you need both the hard and the soft. It's just very important. I think that a woman, in a sense, has a greater role in life - although men would never admit it - than men do, in a way. Because how many situations have been saved by some good woman being able to make a man see sense, even in his work or anything? Like firing somebody or disposing of this or disposing of that? And has been able to soften the blow and it works out better? So we do have a greater role if we will just not be talked out of our ideas and that.

In keeping with her respect for women's experience and feelings, Denise describes how she has taught her sons to be sensitive to women and to put their wives first in their lives. She initially states that women hurt more than men. Later she decides that the difference is that women will admit being hurt whereas men have been taught to cover up their feelings.

> As a matter of fact I think, and I told both my sons when they got married - well, the young one isn't married yet but he was engaged - I told both my sons - the one is married - that once they were married I was not in their life anymore. They could love me as their mother but they were not to come running to see me. They were not to ask my opinion; I wouldn't give it to them. They were to go to their wives. And their wife was number one in their life and she was to be the most cherished object or person or whatever, in their home. She was to be cherished if she was worthy of it, which of course was not doing it right and was not agreeing sometimes. Sometimes some girls just are not really what they should be and they are not good mothers and they're not good wives. But that if they married a good girl, she was to be very, very cherished as the most valuable property in their lives. And to listen to her opinions, to respect it, to help her, because without her life would be nothing, if they loved her. And to really be very generous. Because I feel that a woman puts far more into a relationship ever than a man. He can go from one relationship to the other. Some men, although maybe they don't say it - maybe they feel it but they have been schooled not to admit they hurt. Whereas a woman can't do this. She hurts more I guess, because she will admit she hurts. Where the man may be

> hurting and he just does these things to cover up. But it's very, very important to cherish a woman. She's a very precious person. I never stand up with any little – nothing has ever come up, but my son did come here two or three times. He was a school teacher. He still is, but in three years he was made an assistant principal and in four years he was made a principal. And I never thought he would because he was so terribly quiet he was hardly noticeable. In any room of 10 or 15 people you would hardly notice him in that room. But whatever he interposed into his life, whatever he put back into his field of teaching was noticed immediately by the superintendant. And I believe that it was his home training that just simply bloomed right out in everything he did in his life and it was noticed. He used to come here after school and drop in, come by here before he went home to visit me and see if I was okay and if I needed anything. And I got very cross with him and I said, "You're going to be hurt and I'm going to hurt your feelings, but I don't want you coming here after school anymore. You go straight home to your wife. And if you come here you phone her at the school and tell her, 'I'm going to drop in and see Mom for a few minutes, then go home. Don't ever put me first after a day's work. It's home to your wife." And he was hurt, very much. But I said, 'I know it's going to hurt, but that's the way it's got to be. I'm your mother but I'm out of your life. And don't ever make her feel that it's important to you that you'll see me first. Go right home and then come back or whatever. But just don't feel tied to us anymore. You're a free man, you're married, and she's number one.' That was sad. And I knew it was going to hurt, but I knew it would give him strength at the same time. I know how a young wife feels.

Having been taught in her family to respect and develop her abilities, Denise continues to believe that women should be respected for their abilities. It annoys her that people mistake women for men in business deals because they assume that it is men who do business. She gives two examples, demonstrating how this happens, and describes the action she believes is necessary to correct the inaccurate assumption.

> When I bought the first house – you see it goes to show you that men think only men can accomplish certain things. Take a mortgage on a house, make your house payments, pay for a house and get your title on your house, which I had when I married this man here. I had a title on a home and I owned a car and they were all paid. I would get a letter from the company, 'Mr. So-and-so, it must give you great pleasure to have completed the title on your home.' And it would be *Mr.* because I would sign just my initial. And that was really funny to me because I thought, 'Oh, this is really funny because they think this is a man that's done this,' and it would really make me laugh. They would never have the idea that a woman was doing this. I would write them a letter back and tell them. I would! Because I thought, 'They've got to know!' And our librarian at this school was a woman, Mrs. Rueben, and she's a widow from 10 years. And when she writes for books and writes letters, and something is wrong and she returns the books, they write Mr. Rueben back. And I said to her – she's B. Rueben – I said, 'You write to that company and you tell them you're Mrs. Bernice Rueben. That you can do that type of job just as good as a Mr. B. Rueben.' I said, 'You do it or if you don't, I will. Make them aware that this is a woman that did this piece of work.' In that sense I am an ERA to 100 percent, that I'll carry a placard or anything. But I want the male to know that if the job is well done, it wasn't necessarily done by a man. There was a woman behind it. I'm kind of a stickler on that. That just annoyed me. I thought, 'Just because it was well done, does he think you're Bob? Let him know you're Bernice.' I don't know if she did it but the whole staff would hear me, and there were a few men in the room so it covered it.

Denise explains that she has recognized male chauvinism only in the last 10 years. Prior

to that she never understood what it meant and how it took effect, assuming that men believed women were capable. Now she believes that many men actually believe that men are superior to women.

> It's only in the past 10 years that I have recognized male chauvinism. I never believed it before. I just thought that people were using this and I never understood what it really meant. But after I became aware of it, I really did know that they were there. And if they're in a room, believe me, I'll be the first one to get on their nerves, and awful fast, with a lot of squelches, very subtly and very politely. I've noticed that they really don't think that we can do things as well as they can. Or if you give an opinion, they won't even give you an answer. They can't be bothered. But the same opinion could be given by a man and he'd get into a discussion with him right away. But if it comes from a woman . . . . There's a lot of them like that. I didn't know that before. I didn't believe that men really thought that we were inferior to them. Now not all men, but there really are a lot of men who do think they are superior to women. Which I didn't know really existed, because I was happy in my own life, busy with my own thing. And if anybody mentioned it, it didn't mean anything to me in the sense that I had never noticed it. I didn't believe that men thought we were inferior. Whereas today I have recognized that with some men, they won't come right out and say it, but they really do think that women are lesser than men. And they are out there. But before then I never realized. I thought they thought we were as capable as they were.

Explaining how she first came to be aware of male chauvinism at her job as secretary in a school, Denise describes the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of male teachers which served to exclude or negate female teachers. She then explains how she organized the female teachers to actively change the personal dynamics in the teachers' staff room. A similar disrespect of elementary teachers by junior high teachers was noted by the school principal, and was combatted in a similar way.

> I started noticing that through my work for 14 years at the school. They kind of clung together – the male teachers together and the women teachers together. The men were on one side of the table and the women on the other. If a conversation came up and a female teacher did give an opinion, the men stopped long enough to see what she had to say but then they just kept right on with their own subject and didn't put her conversation into their conversation. They just listened to what she had to say politely, and then they carried on on the same trend they were carrying on – solving a problem with a student or anything, on their own, and they didn't bring it into their idea. But it did come about before the 14 years were up that I took the opportunity to make some changes. I got together with two or three women, some of these really brilliant young people, and I'd say, 'Okay, you sit in Harry's chair today, I'm going to sit in Dan's, you sit in Ron's, and don't you move.' And the men would come in and they could hardly eat their lunch. They were stereotyped; one chair in one little spot. They were so uncomfortable, but they didn't move and they didn't say anything. And we just kept it up until when they were talking – 'I've got something to say too,' and we'd say it. And little by little their eyes opened and everybody joined in and they began to respect those women teachers. They began to listen to what they had to say and they became completely different. They broke away from this little men ring on the one side and women on the other and we stuck to it. We had to break that pattern of male and female – one on one side of the table and one on the other. A simple little thing like that. And we elbowed them if we had something to say. A little bit, nice you know: 'I'm sitting here and I've said

> something.' 'Oh, what did you say?' And it was repeated. We just kept it up all the time. And it broke the barrier of this separation between men and women. Some of our ideas they tried and they worked out beautifully, with the students. In fact, after awhile they were really mixed. There was no separation at all. Nobody sat in the same chair ever again steady for one week, because to me it was just too stereotyped. They couldn't hardly eat their dinner if they were sitting, and I thought, 'That just doesn't make sense to me. That's terrible! To get to that stereotype condition where if you're not sitting in a certain place you can't eat lunch comfortably.' That's just a small thing but it's a beginning, isn't it? It's a way of doing it without hurting anybody but it's a way of doing it without them even noticing it's being done. It's an example sort of thing. But it's like putting a small amount of milk into water and gradually it becomes as white as – instead of becoming white it becomes clearer all the time and it's not noticable. And the first thing you know, the situation is reverted and everybody is conversing and one opinion is as important as the other. 'What do you think about it Audrey?' they'd say, or 'What do you think about it Carolyn?' or something, 'You're not saying anything there.' And they'd want some feedback from the women. And then the elementary teachers were separated from the junior high, and that got broken up. The principal alternated junior high and elementary teachers so that his elementary teachers would have as much an input, because your grade one student problems are as important as your grade nine problem. And it was a very good experience, people-wise. He was a very fair man and he was very basic psychology in the sense that he used a lot of common sense and he didn't jump to conclusions. The thing had to be ironed out and thought out and everything before you jumped to conclusions. So it was good. It was a very educational process.

Denise believes that some men will continue to be chauvinists, though they may give lip service to sex equality. She believes that these men are in the minority, however, and that most men are changing.

> But I still see chauvinism, in some who will never change. They're going to stick to their opinion even though – like they could be sitting with you and I and they could tell you that you're doing just fine and they like what you said and that woman is intelligent or something and she's doing okay. And then they go out the door and say, 'It's just a couple of women, just a couple of nuts,' and go on and do exactly what they were doing before. They'll never change. But they're in the minority. Because you see it now – they will ask a woman for her opinion in some offices or in some corporations or anything. They have found out that it's very valuable, some of the input that they can put into something is very valuable. That they were too rigid and that they weren't pliable enough. That they did make mistakes by sticking to their own rigid opinion. And the pliability of another opinion was very successful and helped the company. They are definitely accepting it now. And it's good! It's a balance! But some people, no, you can't change.

Asked, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?" Denise replied enthusiastically that she supports the Women's Movement and women's desire for change. She perceives some women as radical but sees that this can be useful. Applauding the progress women are making, she hopes that the needs of children will not be forgotten.

> I think it's very, very good. I think it's excellent! Even though some of them are going a little – not like even you or I would consider necessary. You know, some of it's a little radical maybe, or something. But the person who is the radical is going to change something. Something they say or do will be retained, and put into another perspective or usefulness. Some of it may be a little too meaningless, but I think it's just super myself, in the sense that they are people. And they can hold responsible positions. They can make decisions. And really, some of them have wonderful minds that have never been given a chance to be expressed. It's just terrific! Really terrific! Without slighting the home though. You musn't have the children reared from childbirth to the teenage without the mother being in the home, though, because there is the mother role too. And we can never, never get away from it. To that degree, if you're going to change the world and lose the children values, then you haven't changed too much, have you? They play a great role in the formation of new ideas that are going to be projected into the society within their own home and children. But I think that it's great that they're being given consideration and listened to, because some of their opinions are very valuable.

As to how the Women's Movement has affected her personally, Denise explained that she has learned to consider her own needs and to speak out and give her opinion, thus reaffirming her identity. She has grown to understand the needs of other women too, and to appreciate women's situations that are different from her own.

> The Women's Movement has affected me in the sense that I have taken a broader look at myself – that my needs are important – whereas I just used to forget about what I needed. It was just the whole family – make it work nice so this person will be happy, or this will be done this way because it will run smoother in the home, and I'll forget about saying what I think because somebody will be hurt or something. It has affected me in the sense that I speak out now and give my opinion and say, 'I need this or need that,' and that it's necessary for me to function and develop and not become, you know, regroup myself so completely that I become a lost soul. You know, 'Who am I?' You can lose your identity! It's probably repetitious but I think it's done a lot for me. I didn't realize that we had a lot of other roles in life. We kind of just go along in our daily routine and just think we're doing wonderful. But inside yourself there's a burning desire to do something else, kind of brooding there. It's not healthy! It's going to react on you sooner or later and you'll look back and say, 'My gosh! What have I missed?', and become very downhearted or even depressed over it. It could happen. It didn't actually happen to me because during the 50's and early 60's I was very, very busy and I was out in the real world. So it wan't affecting me that much. And I was really so busy that I wasn't giving it a great deal of thought. But now I realize that in a way it was selfish, because many, many women would have traded place with me. I envied them being able to stay home; they would have traded places with me being out in that world, dealing in the secretarial position, meeting people, being quite confident with what I was doing. And they just envied me and I didn't know it. Then at least it made me see their point of view – that they needed something else too, besides just being at home. Because I really have seen this more and more all the time. Where I thought, 'That's where the mother belongs, at home with the children.' That has helped me a great deal with my association with my family. I like to see my daughter-in-law go out for a couple of afternoons a week, because she comes back completely refreshed. I think it's just great! Very valuable things come out of it.

In conjunction with sexism, Denise has also experienced ageism – being dismissed as not important because she was an *older* woman, or as she states, 'just an

old lady.' She describes how at her job she was continually ignored by a young male teacher in such a way that it interfered with her job responsibilities. She also describes the action she took to remedy the situation.

> There's one teacher there in that school in particular, where the age – what was it they called it, the young and the old? The generation gap – it was so big and so obvious with him. When he first came to that school, my opinion or what I did meant nothing to him. Absolutely nothing! I was in another century. The generation gap was so obvious, he wasn't even polite to me. It took me five years without him knowing it, to ignore his attitude, to cope with him. Because I worked with him I couldn't fight him. He was a teacher; I couldn't undermine him. I couldn't send him frustrated into a classroom because the first and foremost thing in the school is the educator and the student. He's there to give his curriculum book knowledge input into that student to get his grades. Also to develop him as a whole person. He didn't have that then but he has since developed it and he's terrific. But I couldn't frustrate any teachers or take two teachers and say, 'She said this,' or 'She said that.' I couldn't do that and send him frustrated into a classroom. I had to be out of the situation. If they came to me and asked, fine. I would say, 'I'll tell you what I would do, but don't do it without asking the principal. He's first in the school; you could get into trouble; it's just the school policy and that's it.' A school is not softness but you're dealing with human beings, you're not dealing with a machine or an insurance company or a car or something. You're dealing with a human body, the soul, the mind and everything. 'He has been chosen the principal in this school because they figure he'll handle the teachers and students, that they will better develop. They have picked this man for that job and he's the principal. Fine, you can take my opinion but you don't need to tell him I told you. But go ask him if it's okay to do it. Let it come from you as a teacher. There's no need to say this is what I said. Ask him, "Is it okay to do this?" If he agrees, fine. If he doesn't, listen to the principal. He's got more experience than I have.' But this young man, I could be speaking to him and if he was standing with a student – and I had my place of work to do to relate back to the central office. I had forms to fill, I had things that had to be in on a certain day at a certain time. So it would go through their offices and back to the school, back into the teachers' hands on a certain day in a certain time. And they had 75 schools and they couldn't be waiting for one school 15 days late. Teachers' reports and things had to be all done and salaries and everything, and back into the big wheel of the school. It sounds like an establishment, but there it is. But the teacher has to work too. And I would go up to have him sign his name to a teacher report or an absentee report, and he would leave me standing at the door for 10 minutes. The bell would be gone and there would be some students in the room, but he wasn't teaching, and he would just leave me standing there with this paper in my hand. And he knew I was there, but I was just the old lady. So I walked away and I'd get him in the staff room in front of the principal and then he'd be fine because he had no choice. So one day he had delayed a paper by about five days and it was the deadline and I thought, 'Well, he has got to do it today; that's all there is to it.' So the bell had gone, I went to his class and he was chit-chatting with the students, which is fine – teacher-student relation is important. But I thought, 'This paper is delayed long enough. It's got to go in today with the rest of them.' And he just completely ignored me. And the board had phoned about it, you see, 'Would I please have that report in? Sent to So-and-so, to be filled out and signed and returned to us, and would you please have it in today?' So I didn't tell him that the board had phoned or anything. I just went up and he kept me waiting and waiting until finally I left. Then he came trotting out and he said, 'What did you want?' I said, 'It's fine. Don't worry about it. Carry on. I'll phone Mr.So-and-so, the superintendant of the board. I'll tell him that I tried to get you to sign this several times and you delayed it. And I will just be honest with him and tell him that it's not my fault that it hasn't been coming.

> Other things have been too important. This just takes two minutes and it has to be done too, but not by you. I won't bother you anymore.' And you know, for a whole week that guy just sat on pins and needles, and he was just sick. He told his friend that it had meant more to him – he hadn't slept for a week – he had done more thinking; he hadn't realized what he had done. I had the right to say that he'd been late and refused to sign it; that he was too busy, to come back another time. And I had every right to do what I was going to do if I was going to do it, which I didn't. The principal signed it for me because he knew the situation. But I just said, 'Just carry on. I'll do my share, you do yours, and that's it. I won't bother you anymore.' And it cured him! He used to come into the office for seven years after that: 'Do I have anything to sign for you? Is there anything waiting that I can do?' It scared him out of his wits, but it was the only way to cure him. Little by little by little – it took him a long, long time to find out that we were intelligent. And he told me many times before I left the school, that experience from older people, he learned, is pretty important. So usually I teach people by example, but in this case I used the extreme method because nothing else seemed to work. Nothing seemed to get through. So I took the extreme method of saying, 'You're fine. Just carry on. You teach, that's what you're here for. And I'm going to relate to the board regarding this form and this thing according to my secretarial duty, as to why it isn't there. I will relate to them. I will handle it.' And of course that was pretty scary. Because he knew that I was right, that he had done this. I wouldn't be lying. He knew that one thing that I wouldn't do is say a dishonest thing. He was frightened he was going to be faced with it, but he didn't come and ask me, 'Did you do it? Did you phone?' Which he could have done, and saved himself too, which I wanted him to learn – to open up.

Denise perceives this particular teacher as having been self–centered and naive. She explains that he learned a lesson from the action she took, and that he matured and became a fine teacher and a man able to appreciate that he could learn from an older woman.

> I'll show you how naive this young teacher was in many, many areas. Using a telephone or anything, he was a naive person, is what he was, He wouldn't hold on the telephone if you put him on hold. He would say, 'Oh, I can't be bothered with this,' and he'd throw the phone down. 'Always hold,' he said. So he said, 'Would you phone the IMC for me and order me some films?' And he told me this at 11 o'clock and I said, 'Sure, because I can afford to hold the phone. I don't have students to go to. Sure. I don't mind.' This was about 11 o'clock and the bell went at 11:45 for junior high students. And the principal was in the office at 11:45 and I could see the stairs of the junior high section, of all the legs and the people coming down. It faced into a big glass window in front of me and as you came down those stairs you could see just like looking through this window. I would be sitting behind that window under the bright light and you could see everything that was going on. I said to the principal, 'Watch this! I put this call through around 11 o'clock and it's all over and everything, but I'm going to show you how naive he is, not thinking or whatever. You watch! I'm going to pick up this phone and sit here and he'll come down those stairs and see me through this glass door and he's going to think that I've been holding this phone for 45 minutes.' He says, 'Not really!' I said, 'Watch and see!' So I'm sitting here and he comes up and he says, 'You haven't been holding for 45 minutes, have you?' I said, 'No, this is another call,' and hung it up. And the principal said, 'You're right!' I said, 'See how he is. He's got to grow up!' And he says, 'Well, he's doing it little by little by little.' I said, 'Yeah, but no one would even consider it, but there it is. He thinks the whole world is stopped because he needs something. The whole world is going to stop. And I'd sit there for 45 minutes.' And so gradually he's out of it. He does all his phone calls on his own. He doesn't bother anybody. He's the top teacher in the school. But he

was worth saving. Many a principal might have let him go, you know. He'd have not made out. Well, he's just super. Just super! And before I left there and they had a dinner for me, the principal happened to say that I was there 14 years and I said, 'Yes, I was here too long.' And he's the first one that said, 'Oh, no! You're leaving too soon.' He was the first one to at least recognize that he had learned a lot through an older person, which was rewarding. And I didn't push it on him. I just knew. You see, to me the world had not touched this fellow yet. If there was a sick child, if somebody had a very bad situation in the family, if somebody was financially up against it, there was no reason for that. It shouldn't have happened. Off he would be with it. And I thought that the day life touches him he'll just – you won't be able to see him. Life hadn't touched him yet. Everything had gone on pretty nice – no big anything. And I thought, 'Boy, you'd better be prepared.' Because he has two nice little children and I thought, 'You know, it could happen to one of his children.' But he grew up. He's just super now. But again, a man wouldn't have taken that patience with him. So therefore, the role of women – I'm sure there's a lot of them that will help a person, because I liked him and I knew it could be done but over a long period of time.

Denise has also experienced abuse in her role as secretary. She gives an example of how she was unfairly blamed by a teacher who used her as an excuse for his own incompetence. Denise believes that her own honesty and commitment to doing a good job (values learned from her parents) saved her from being discredited.

I always said to myself, 'No matter how much anybody puts you down and says, "Oh, she made that mistake and I didn't make it" or "I bet it was her that did that; there's no way I could have done that," I would never, never justify myself.' I'd leave it. I'd say to myself, 'The principal is intelligent. He will see, if given enough time, that my work is completed and accurate, and it is going in,' and he did. He did. Nobody could say, 'So-and-so did that.' He'd say, 'No way! She doesn't do that kind of work. She didn't do this; somebody else did it.' And he'd look at somebody and say to me, 'This is not your work. Correct it for me. Who did this? Who wrote this letter?' So you don't have to do a lot of talking. Just do your work daily, consistently, and it works out. Only once did I defend myself with a teacher who was to send a cheque and he didn't send it. He sent a busload of students to Jasper and he had to have $225 at the office of that chartered bus, the day they left the city. And the cheque was still in the school and we didn't know. He was a kind of a not too organized person. And I guess the bus wasn't chartered right from the immediate office where the cheque goes. It leaves from a depot. The bus was gone, the students were on their way to Jasper, and whatever his name was, I forget now, still had the cheque in the school. The man phoned and said, 'When are there students leaving for Jasper? I have this bus waiting.' And they had left the day before. I said, 'The students are in Jasper now.' And he said, 'Where is the cheque?' I said, 'What cheque?' He said, 'The teacher who arranged all this was to be here at noon today with $225 in this office before that bus left the city, because there is an insurance policy tied in with the payment of this to cover the students.' So we get ahold of the teacher and I said, 'Would you phone Mr.So-and-so about his cheque?' He picks up the phone and said, 'I gave it to the secretary to mail 10 days ago and she didn't mail it.' And the principal was standing there and I was sitting there. I had talked to the principal, unknown to this teacher, that I had never seen the cheque. And he hung up the phone. And the principal said, 'You pick up that phone; you phone that man right now in front of this woman; and you tell him that you lied, that the cheque is in your desk. That my secretary – she's *my* secretary – did not handle that cheque, didn't see it. It was your responsibility, and you do it right now in front of me, right this minute. There is no way you're going to put this on her, because we've discussed it.' He was in his office when the phone call came through. We both spoke to this

> man and we both wondered where the cheque was. I didn't have it, the man didn't, and the teacher was teaching. So at noon we confronted him, and he picks up the phone and says that I had the cheque. And the principal made him revert the call. He let him go through the whole conversation, hang up the phone, and then he says, 'Pick it up and dial that number.' That cured him! And he said, 'Furthermore, you're going to apologize to her. You're going to say you're sorry, before you leave this office.' He was cured! He never tried that again. Because it was very fortunate. That's what I mean, you see. What you have to watch is the secretary. How many people, unknown to you, will say that over a telephone? They'll have something in their pocket, 'I gave it to the secretary yesterday,' and then they run to the mailbox and put it in. That's not right, you know. That's what I mean in fairness in a job. That's something I never, never, never had a mistake that I did – and I made a few mistakes – and the principal would say, 'Who did this?' I'd look up and say, 'I did.' So he knew. He knew that the times that I did I would always admit it. And I would go and correct it right there, instead of wondering how to correct it. 'What do we do? Who did it?' I'd say, 'I goofed. That's my mistake. I forgot to sign the cheque. I forgot to put the date on it,' or some little thing. And that was the end of the line. It never got out of the office or hurt anybody. But that's what I learned. Again, that's the home background. Be honest, and it always pays off. It saves a lot of lengthy problems. But I've worked with a lot of people that don't.

In Denise's experience women will admit to making mistakes more readily than will men, who tend to try to cover their mistakes. She wonders if men are afraid to admit they have failed because they are looking for advancement more so than are women.

> But I find that in that respect, a woman will admit her mistake faster than a man. Not 100 percent, but on very many occasions men either say absolutely nothing and correct it as best they can on their own, or if it's serious enough they do have to admit it and correct it. But if it's some small thing that they should correct and it not be known, many men don't want to have anything make them look incompetent in their work. They don't want to admit that they failed in some tiny little area. They want to make it look like they can always do things right, this type of person. And I found that a little more prevalent in the male than the female. A woman is not that greatly afraid that she made a little mistake. And it can be because, I guess, men are looking more for advancement. And if they've made too many mistakes they won't get it. I just could never figure that out. They tend to cover mistakes a little more than women. That was my experience. That's what I found.

Comparing men and women, Denise states that in her experience men are generally easier to work with. She has sensed a competitive attitude amongst women – competition about clothing, for example, which she sees as a waste of time. Her advice to women is to avoid cluttering up their minds and life with such concerns. She advises them to be sensible, practical, neat and pleasant, and to concentrate on doing their work, convinced that if they do a good job they will gain the respect of their bosses.

> But to get along and work with, for me, I have found that – you've probably heard this before too, it's probably old hat – that men are generally easier to work with than women. I don't know if it's because of the better looking woman, the one with a nicer figure, or what it is; there's more competition amongst women. Men is their navy blue suits and wide tie or whatever. There's the clothing coming back much more nice now, and different corduroys and all this. But they aren't so striving to be more attractive or wear different things than each other. They don't care if a guy has a better

> looking suit than he has one day or the next. Whereas a woman instantly notices another woman with a really nice dress. They really challenge one another, don't they, for their personal appearance. Which is terribly important. But men don't seem to have – that's not clogging their work. It doesn't take up any of their time. It doesn't clutter up their work, because they probably don't even notice if it's the same suit on three days in a row. Where that is a little clutteration there in a woman's striving to be the better dressed or something, and does take up a little of your mind and time. I would say that's it's a time waster. Be neat, be attractive, wear clothes according to what the position asks. But if the next person has got a fine, beautiful dress on, so what? She must make six mistakes in her typing that day. Whereas if you're sitting there efficiently doing your work looking very neat and just as attractive as she is, and maybe not the latest model dress, you're not gonna – don't waste your time with that. You're wasting energy and time with that. Like her anyway and let her dress the way she wants to. That's her life, and if that's what she needs, let her have it. But don't be cluttering up your life, clothes–wise. It's important, but not *that* important. Be yourself! If you're going to be the one with the sturdy, good–heeled shoes that you can get around on faster, fine. And if the boss likes the real high, high heels, that's fine. Let him. As long as you do your work, if your work is important, it's going to be what he's going to look for anyway, in the final analysis. At the end of the month you're going to get paid for whatever type of work you did. And be honest enough to the job, you're working in, whatever field you're in, to be loyal to the company you're in, because they're paying your bread and butter. So be loyal to them and do your work really well and you'll never get fired. Don't come in sloppy and untidy, but if you're not the type that can wear a four inch heel, don't wear it. You're going to fall flat on your fanny anyway and maybe be laid up for six weeks. Be sensible! Do the best you can. Of course the appearance you have, you can certainly enhance it in every way you can. It's nice to come in and see people who are attractive, neat and clean and pleasant. And number one, pleasant. Clothing shouldn't be done to an extreme: to deliberately pay out a lot of money to say, 'I'm definitely going to have a better dress on than her if I have to pay $200 for it.' Don't let that clutter your life.

Denise describes an incident she experienced in her office in which one woman's dress habits preoccupied the minds of the entire office staff. She explains how she attempted to put the woman's behavior into perspective and not dwell on it. Noting again that women seem to be affected by these incidents more so than men, she advises women to try to understand and like each other.

> I think that I have definitely seen that in some people. I worked one year in one place and I can honestly say that the one woman walked in, and everybody noticed it before the end of the year, with at least $300 to $400 worth of clothes on her back every day. And never once in the 52 weeks that I worked there did she have on the same dress. It didn't bother me, but it bothered the rest of the staff. They used to wonder about it. 'How does she do it? How can she do it?' It was mind–boggling. But at the same time if you're going to let that bother you, you are interfering with your position. You are not functioning at full capacity. So let Jane wear her dress to the end of her days, if she's got 500 dresses. Try as hard as you can not to care to the extent that you think about it and you can't function right. It's no big deal in a sense. But she must have been out to prove something to somebody. We don't know. We feel that she missed an awful lot of something in her life and this replaced it. And it wasn't for us to question or even think about it because she didn't seem to be doing it to hurt anyone or anything. She just seemed to need that. So fine. We'd all had five or six different changes of clothes and everything, and we certainly weren't shabby. Even the boss at that point said, 'She really floors me! How can you keep up

> the expense that she has?' He even mentioned it a couple of times, and most of the time we'd all say, 'Well, you know, maybe she's got a real rich husband or something,' and we let it go at that, because it wasn't that big a deal. It was a kind of an experience type of thing, and given a certain situation it was an experience that made you wonder. But I didn't let it bother me, or the women either. In fact I would say, 'Well, you know, some people need fancy cars, some people need fancy clothes, and she needs fancy clothes and somehow she can get it. It certainly doesn't matter. She's here on time, she seems to do her work very well. So maybe her mother's very, very wealthy; maybe she didn't treat her right when she was young and makes it up to her with clothes.' And we just let it go. But it was an experience that can creep into an office or a place of work – some little detail thing like that – and it affects the whole work if you're going to just stand, five or six women in a little group, wondering about this other person. You're just affecting your work. That I think is more prevalent with women than men, is what I'm trying to say. Because they probably joke about it once or twice amongst themselves, 'I wonder where Joe gets all his clothes? He must be bootlegging on the side or something,' and they'd go on with their work. It would be a once over, twice over deal, and that would be the end of it. Whereas women are more conscious of what another woman does. And they should try I think, primarily number one is to like one another. Give each other a reason for her. Understand that there must be a reason for it and leave her life alone. Whatever she does is her business. And as much as possible try to eliminate time-wasting things that you can't change anyway, or wouldn't want to if you could. It isn't that meaningful. That's more prevalent in women than in men.

Concluding her answer to the initial question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?", Denise reiterates her belief that women must respect and value themselves, an attitude that she learned as a child and which she continues to hold.

> But probably what comes to mind as far as my experience as a woman would be, that if you want respect, respect yourself. And put a value on being a woman. Don't belittle yourself and think you can't be just as important as a male. Like yourself as a woman and achieve your potential according to what you have and the gifts that were given to you. Use them to their fullest. Don't let anybody brainwash you that it's mediocre to be a woman. It is not! It's a good life and very rewarding in many ways. But you give yourself, number one, a lot of respect as a woman. I learned that as a child, to respect myself and that all people actually are equal. It's the human being in themselves that puts more on life, male or female. It's the person themselves who evaluates themselves, and they may think he or she is less or more than someone else, which you shouldn't do because there's a lot of equality when it comes right down to it. We are not lesser. Not by a long ways.

Reflecting on her experience that women have a greater understanding of certain things than do men, she despairs about the lack of understanding indicated by remarks such as 'She asked for it' or 'That shouldn't even bother you.' Again she ponders on the differences she has seen in women and men, and wonders about the cause of these differences.

> I find that in some areas we're more understanding, in the way we can see through. We are given sort of more of an understanding, in a way, to see through certain things than men. What it is I don't know. The way our systems were made, we bear children, different things. But we will have more empathy in some situations than men, which should have sympathy and understanding but they don't think it's necessary. If a person is feeling down

> or anything over a certain situation, even a simple thing like a broken love affair or something, a man may think, 'Oh, big deal! You'll get over it,' or 'She asked for it!' It's one of the worst things I hate in the English language is, 'She asked for it!' I think it should be eliminated out of the English language. Nobody asks for anything, as to the turnabout of the situation. But they'll make very small of certain things. It can be a very small thing to a woman but a man will think it is absolutely nothing. 'You shouldn't be. That shouldn't even bother you.' But they should stop and think that it does bother you, that it is something important to you; and they should respect it. We should do the same for them too. But just tiny little insignificant things around the house, like having a doily nice and straight on a table and a little ornament – to come along and throw your newpaper and knock the doily crooked or something like that. If you mention it they say, 'Big deal! That's nothing!' It's a little thing, but it means a lot to her. 'She doesn't like it; she like it a certain way; I won't disturb it. It makes her happy to have it like that.' Just hundreds of little things. The big things, when it comes right down to the crux, the big things, they're there. They're supportive. But the little things that women – feminine things that women appreciate and cherish, should be respected. Because again, it's a clear definition then of male loving female, which is the basis of the whole thing. We can't live one without the other. If you lose all respect, you're going to lose some beautiful relationships. What seems menial to one person, you should try to understand it and just say, 'That person likes this this way. It means a lot to this person. Fine! I will respect that.' So respect I guess, in all ways, for yourself and other people. And by respect – it's a complex word in itself and it has such a broad field, but yet it comes right down to a very small thing sometimes, doesn't it? I think anyway. It goes both ways. To recognize what the other person likes and dislikes, what hurts them, what doesn't hurt them. And not to deliberately just put it aside and carrry right on through. It hurts. And I suppose that some males it hurts too. Not as much I suppose, because it's a little difficult to explain – they pretend that it doesn't I guess. They don't want to be as cluttered with little ideas as we are I suppose. I don't know what it is. But we are more easily hurt than men. Maybe not. Maybe they don't show it. But we were meant to be more easily hurt because we have a purpose in the world. If a child is sick, who's beside the crib? The mother mostly. And we feel more deeply. Not all fathers. Some of them are there maybe, and the mother isn't. But we were made to sooth the wounds quite a bit more I think. We have that ability. The world would be a pretty poor place without it. When you think of your Florence Nightingales and look at Madame Curie and these women. Really, what would the world be without some of these people having gone in there and had this great ability to do these things?

In noting the contributions women have made to the world, Denise makes clear that she values the role women have played taking care of others. She maintains that if women ruled the world there would be no war. Briefly examining some historical aspects of the Women's Movement, she concludes that women have a right to equality and to be treated with respect.

> So I don't know. They're beginning to recognize the contribution women are making to the world. But if women ruled the world there would be no war. They'd find a way around it. I don't know. But they'd better never belittle us because it would be a mighty poor world without us. And I will admit some women degrade other women, but some men degrade other men too, and they accept it more readily. That's okay. See, that's from away back – men do this and a woman can't. That's archaic, because what a woman can't do in public, a man shouldn't do either if he respects himself. It's a broad field, a very broad field. And it will take a few years yet. Some of the women have hurt the ERA by taking certain attitudes towards it and using wrong appeals to prove a point. Like at the beginning it was burn the bra, and all this which was

just a timewaster. What the ERA was, was to start away back when the women had a right to vote. It began there. But we're not looking for how we dress or anything. We're looking for equality in salary. And it goes right down now to if you want to drive a truck, you drive a truck. If you want to drive a bus, you drive a bus and all this. But some of them wasted a lot of time. But that's the media problem too. And the media was probably male. There was a lot of women, long before Women's Lib, because of their personal physique or the way they were built, who could get away with a dress without a bra, long before ERA ever came in. Others couldn't. It was just the same, wasn't it? Men don't wear bras, so women were burning their bras, which was just a time-waster. Media, or a lot of men made it sensational. I think that they've come a long ways, and I think it's a good thing. I don't think that any woman should take abuse from anyone, even in a marriage. She did not make a vow at the alter, 'I will live with this abusive fellow for the rest of my days.' The vows were not like that. There's many a broken home, broken marriage now. And she didn't say, 'I will live with an alcoholic for the rest of my life.' There are reasons for breaking up and I thoroughly agree with them. They are human beings; they deserve respect; they deserve to be treated like people. I don't blame some of them for leaving certain situations.

L. Alice

Alice is a 32 year old woman of English heritage, born and raised in Edmonton. After living for several years in other Canadian centers, she returned to Edmonton two and a half years ago. Alice is the youngest child in her family, having a brother who is two years older. Her mother has a Normal school education and is a school teacher. Her father, who died a year ago, had a grade eight and trade school education and worked with an oil company. Alice has a Bachelor of Education degree. In addition to teaching for five years, she has also worked at drafting and model building, as a travel consultant, and as a restaurant manager. For the past year and a half she has worked in and managed her own restaurant. She is secure financially, her assets being her $50,000 to $60,000 business, a $17,000 shareholder's loan, and half ownership of a house in B.C. She draws between $750 to $2000 monthly from her business for living expenses. Alice belongs to a fitness center.

In answer to the question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?", Alice responded initially that she doesn't think of herself as a woman, she thinks of herself as a *person*. On the other hand, she realizes that other people think of her as a woman and make assumptions about her on this basis, both in relation to her personal life and her career.

> Well that's a big question. I don't think I'd really thought about it until you mentioned it today. In what I'm doing I never think of myself as being a woman. In my business, or anything. That's the way I felt when I was a student – I always felt like a student person, I didn't feel like a female student. When I was a school teacher I felt like I was a school teacher, not necessarily a woman teacher. And same thing now. Every once in awhile it comes as a surprise to me that people are surprised, that they show surprise. You know, they say, 'Oh, look what you've done, for such a young woman.' It seems to me they're making some kind of a compensation for the fact, you know. What has it meant to be a woman? Well, and then there's a lot of other things too. There's the other people who will look at me and say, 'What's wrong with her that she didn't do all those things that women are supposed to do?' Like get married, have kids, and that kind of thing. I don't have any defense or excuse or I don't say, 'I never wanted to do those things,' you know. It's just the way it happened. I've always done things that I really wanted to do and that seemed important to me. And along the way, all those things that I was *supposed* to be, a woman doing, just didn't happen, or hasn't happened.

Reflecting on where her ideas came from about what a woman is *supposed to* be, Alice remembers that the message that she *should* get married and settle down came from her father. This idea was reinforced by the games she played with girls her own age, both when she was a young child and when she was an adolescent. Careers were not

considered an option – they were for 'unfeminine' women – old maids. Thus, her mother's advice to 'Don't be like me. Go out and do things.', was countered by many forces supporting marriage and home life.

> I think that in my age group all the little girls played house, and it was, 'You would meet your knight in shining armour and live happily ever after.' I don't think that message came very strongly from my family. Definitely not from my mother. It might have come from my father, from his viewpoint. That might have been it. Sort of aiming me toward the day when I would get married, settle down and you know, that kind of thing. But I must have got that much more from my father than from my mother. I think because my mother maybe at some time was saying, 'Go out and do everything you want to do. Don't settle down and get married and be bound to the hum-drum life that I'm bound to.' And my dad, I think I was his little girl and he wanted somebody to take care of me, you know. He wanted me to settle down so that he wouldn't any longer have to worry about me. You know. Maybe that's it. I don't know. But again, like I said, I haven't really thought this out before. But what I think too is that we read the equivalent of Harlequin Romances and all that kind of stuff, you know, and 'Hey, that's the way it's supposed to be. That's what girls did!' I think. I don't know. I can remember being with – now this was really young, probably first year of school or something like that. We would do things like, 'I'm going to have six kids and I'm going to name them blah-blah-blah-blah-blah.' When we played house, everybody had their role, you know. Dad goes off to work – who knows what he does after that, but he's gone. Mom does housework and that we were all sort of – that's hard to remember. I'm not really sure of when, where and how specific things happened. I think too, when we were in junior high school and there were myself and three or four other girls who were really, really close friends. You know, we dressed alike, we did everything together. We would sit around and say things like, 'Well when I meet the man I'm going to marry . . .' and 'I wonder which one of us will get married first?' And that kind of thing. I mean it was just that stuff that we were going to do; we were going to white-picket-fence it, you know. We really didn't consider any other alternatives. Careers and doing that kind of thing was something that people did who weren't, who didn't have the feminine qualities to get married and settle down and fall in love and all that kind of stuff. Maybe. I don't know. But you always thought about the librarian or the old maid school marm kind of thing. I know that women who are a little bit younger than me, like five or six years younger than me, they were already influenced by a much more liberal kind of thing when they were I'm sure around 14, 15, 16 years old. Like the girls that I went to school with, the girls and boys that I went to school with, they were all pretty sure of exactly what slot we were going to fit into, you know. I should talk about that right now with some of the younger women I know, some of the girls who are 22 and 23. I don't think they had those set feelings right from the start, anywhere near the way we did at that age.

Speaking further about her mother, Alice explains that she actually got two conflicting messages from her. On the one hand she was told to go out into the world, do things for herself and avoid being trapped the way her mother was. On the other hand she witnessed her mother quietly taking second place to her father, letting him think he made the decisions, expecting him to be the leader, and accepting her secondary role as wife as the fate of women. Alice felt the impact of both messages: she worked at being independent but at the same time expected men to take a leadership role. She also felt

the impact of her father's and society's expectations – she experienced a strong urge to fall in love and 'live happily ever after.'

> My mother, she's a pretty independent lady in her own way. But I think she has always taken a 'The man wears the pants' kind of situation. I think she's always been like that. And I think I'm like that too. I'm like my mother. If I spend any time with a man, I expect him to take the first steps and things, you know, to be the stronger one, and me the weaker one, kind of thing. Stronger and weaker in the sense that my mom and dad always talked about things, but my dad always made the decision. Or she made him think that he made the decision, you know. She let him think that he made the decision. I'm like that. I'm like that. And I think I really learned that from my mother, you know. When times were tough, you grit your teeth and you be the strong silent one in the background, but don't let anybody know you're that strong, you know. Gee, it's so funny, because I've never really thought in these ways before. Especially about my mom and my dad, and so on. And expecting the man to take the leadership role, you know. If in doubt, sit back and let the men take the leadership role. Definitely that's something that I picked up from my mother, that's for sure. Does that make sense? Maybe after all those things that I say about my mother, and that I learned that kind of a pattern from mom, she would probably say, 'But whatever you do, don't be like me.' Because like I said, 'Go out and do all those kinds of things. You'll have plenty of time in your life to follow around with a man, and look after his wishes and his needs.' Like I said, I think I picked up these patterns from my mother, but I think if I was to out and out ask her, 'Mom, should I be like you?' I think she would have probably said, 'No!' It's sort of like saying – well like at times when my dad was being a real jerk, my mom would sort of sit back quietly and say, 'This is the cross we have to bear; this is the cross we women have to bear. We look after our men, we do what we can to make life as pleasant as possible, but Alice, if you have the choice, at least put it off for awhile.' You know? But I think that now, after all I've said, I would find myself saying to my mom, 'But Mom, all I want to do is fall in love, be happy, live happily ever after, that's all I really want.' I think when I was 24, 25, my mom would say, 'Oh, she's doing well for herself. She's living her own life, she's becoming her own person and she's independent, and so on.' And there's me saying, 'Yeah, Mom, I'm not sure I want to be so independent.' Who knows? I feel like I'm contradicting myself. Like I said, I haven't really thought in these terms before. But it seems when I'm explaining one thing and then the other, they come out opposites. I don't know. Well, first of all, I aimed and worked at being pretty independent, in being my own self. And maybe a lot of times I was saying, 'But all you want to do is fall in love, settle down, and play the wife and mother role.' But maybe really I didn't, you know. It seems that the kinds of men I've spent time with have been absolutely impossible in terms of the settle down routine. I'm not attracted to the kinds of guys that want to settle down, you know. That kind of says something to me. I kind of say, 'Well, maybe I thought this was supposed to happen and be happily ever after, but maybe happily ever after for me is when I'm 65, you know. Maybe that's when – who knows?

Alice explains that she is continuing to live an independent life today, is successful in her business and is respected by her workers. She feels she has been able to achieve this without adopting an aggressive, 'masculine' role – without losing her 'femininity'. In fact Alice has learned to *use* her femininity, as did her mother, to manipulate situations and get what she wants. She describes how she purposely uses her 'feminine wiles' – her charm and sexuality – and adopts a subservient role, in order

to get what she wants.

> As far as the way I live right now from day to day, I have my own business, it's very successful, I have a lot of really good people who work under me, and respect me, I can hold my own in any kind of situation, you know, as far as it can be men, women, children, whatever. But I still feel that I play in my own way – I haven't taken on a masculine role, let's say it that way. In terms of, like I said, I thought of the woman as being the follower, the man as being the leader. In my own way of life right now I'm very much a leader, but I don't feel like I've taken on all of the – I still feel myself as a – what am I trying to say? A lot of people, when they first meet me, think that I'm going to be hard-driving, aggressive, those kinds of things. But I'm not. I still feel very feminine, you know. I don't feel like a woman making it in a man's world. No, not at all. I feel like me, with all the feminine characteristics and everything that I've grown up with. I *use* the fact that I'm a woman, sometimes. I'll use charm to get what I want, sometimes, you know. If somebody comes along and says, and especially there are a lot of men, whatever you want to call them, I hate to use 'chauvinistic', or that kind of word, but I've had a lot of men that come along that will want to push me a little bit in terms of my business, or they're trying to sell me something, or they're trying to talk real estate or legalities or accounts or whatever. And they'll try and talk down to me a little bit. Well, I don't get up in arms and try and get defensive about that. If you want to talk to me like some frivolous little female, go ahead, and I'll probably let it go that way. But I, what am I trying to say? I don't feel I still will stay in that sort of – how do I say it? – what I consider to be a feminine characteristic, feminine kind of role. I'm just trying to think of a specific instance that would start me talking that way, and how I would . . . . Okay, I have in my mind that I'm looking at new space and talking to the real estate man, let's say. Okay, and he grabs out his pencil and paper and ta-dah-ta-dah-ta-dah, and then he'll say, 'Oh, no, no, you can't do that, there, my dear.' And I'll say (sweetly in soft, high voice) 'Oh, can't I, sir?' You know? And it allows me to be a good listener. I will allow myself to be told, lots. But what I believe and what I take in is then a matter of weighing it out or dealing with it. But I will be a very quiet, charming lady, when somebody wants to talk hard business with me. And they'll say to themselves, 'Oh here I have just this charming little lady, and I'm going to tell her and show her everything.' Well I am just the charming little lady that they want me to be. I let them play their whole hand, you know. And that, as far as I'm concerned, is *using* my feminine characteristics. It's difficult when you take the word 'feminine' and slot it into that, because there are probably men who do things exactly the same way and would never call that a feminine characteristic. And I'll use a little bit of sexuality to get people to listen to me, who otherwise might not, you know. Subservient is a good word, if you're looking for a word, yeah. And I definitely use my charm to my advantage. Definitely. And my sexuality. Isn't that a confession! So you see, if I deal in a business world – and I hear a lot of women say, 'How does it feel to be dealing with men in a man's world?' and I say, 'I deal with them as myself.' And if that means using my feminine wiles to get me where I want to go, well I'll use it. Why not?

Alice recognizes that there are disadvantages to being sweet and subservient – she may not be taken seriously or be respected. When this happens she becomes angry. However, she continues to use her charm to get what she wants, knowing it will work. As she spoke she recognized that in using her charm she is setting herself up for the disrespect she sometimes gets but does not want.

> Looking at the other side of the coin though as well, it means that from time to time I'm not taken as seriously as I'd like to be. And I'm always aware of when that happens. Always! And that usually makes me mad. That usually makes me quite mad. But, yeah, there have been times when I've had, when I've dealt in situations where – okay, here's an example, here's a good example. I was hunting around and really doing some scrounging for some equipment and I was going to warehouses, oh, all kinds of dealers who were dealing in equipment in all states of repair, and so on. And in doing that I had learned a lot about it. I knew so that when I was going looking for a certain piece I knew exactly what questions I wanted to ask. And I went to one place, and my father all of sudden, after me hunting around for months and doing a lot of ground work myself, said, 'Can I come? I want to see some of these places you're visiting.' I said, 'Sure.' My dad was retired. He decided that he'd come with me. And I went, walked in, stomped into this one place, was very charming with the gentleman who met me, and was asking him some questions. And every time I asked him a question he answered it to my father. And the poor fellow didn't know anything about these things I was saying. But every time I asked him, and the more specific I got, he kept answering my dad. It made me really mad! It made me really mad! On the other hand, if I want something done, like a plumber – the plumber comes to my place, he just loves it. It's not just me, it's also the girls who work for me, because the whole situation, my business has that whole air about it. And the plumber will come, and he'll be there five minutes after I've called, because we're charming women, and we pour all over him and we treat him so nice. I get good service that way. I know that's an awful thing to say – it's not an awful thing to say, it works! I call over to a supply place that's about two blocks from where I am, and I say (in a high, soft, squeaky voice), 'Hi, this is me. And I forgot to order my such-and-such.' 'We'll send it right down.' They wouldn't do that for Joe's Diner, on the other corner. Never! But they do it for me. But it can be cause for a loss of respect. You know. Like I want to be – this is a contradiction – I want to use my femininity to get from you what I want, but if you treat me like a frivolous female who knows nothing, I'll get mad. Although I'll keep it to myself. Like the shopping with my dad. I didn't do anything about that. Didn't do anything at all. Just left. Never went back to that guy. Because he wasn't taking me seriously.

That Alice perceives herself as capable of influencing others only in terms of persuading or manipulating them with her feminine charm is validated in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as being powerful?" She explains that she sees power as primarily negative, and doesn't think in those terms.

> Oh, oh! Powerful. Now that's – powerful – that's an odd world. I don't really feel a definite sense of power in much of anything right now. Even as 'the boss' with my employees, I don't feel powerful. I exert my influence on them, but I wouldn't really call it powerful. I don't hold any power over anybody in terms of, if I do something can I definitely see the effect that it has on that other person. I'm thinking in terms of, I've seen people struggle for power – two people struggling for power together. And one will hurt the other one and stand back and say, 'I have the power to hurt you.' Power to me doesn't seem like a very nice word.
>
> I don't necessarily come across as a strong person, you know. I will exert persuasiveness, kind of thing. I did talk about though how maybe I had power over the plumber. You know. Because that is a manipulating kind of thing, when I was talking about how if I call the plumber and say, oh, in so many words, I'll exaggerate this but in so many words, 'Me and my helpless girls are really in trouble. Can you please come and help?' 'Well we're all booked up for the afternoon.' 'But we're so helpless.' You know. I'm exaggerating but you get the gist of it. And then when the guy comes the girls just pour all over him and tell him what a hero he is. And I will stand back and say, 'I don't really feel any hero-worship for this man, but I'm going

> to exert that *feminine* power over him,' if you will call it that. Where you say, through persuasion and through whatever else, I can get him to do whatever I want him to do. And I don't necessarily think that's very good. Like I said, I might stand back and say, 'I have the power, as a woman, to get results from this man and his employer that other people would not get.' That doesn't necessarily mean to me that it's good.

As she continues to talk about power, it becomes clear that Alice does not feel comfortable with the idea of power. To her power means power *over* someone, power to hurt. There is no sense of a personal power which involves taking direct action or being open and straight about her needs or intentions. Apparently for Alice, being 'feminine' excludes this direct kind of personal power.

> To talk about the power to hurt somebody, that seems to me the way you talk about power. And to talk about, 'I have the power to make you feel good,' those two words don't seem to go together to me. I think of power *over* others, and power in a manipulative kind of a way: 'I can get you to do what I want you to do – I have the power.' You know. But I'm not that kind of person with the people that I work with. And the same when I taught school. I never, ever said, 'Well, you do that because *I* say so, and *I'm* the boss. And for no other reason.' I'm definitely, definitely not like that. I used to joke about it with my students and say, 'Don't give me any lip, cause *I'm* the teacher. You know. And same thing with my employees. I would say, 'I'm sitting down and having my coffee break because *I'm* the boss.' But that's all a joke. And I never have them do anything that I wouldn't do myself. As a matter of fact, I would more often take on one of those once in a blue moon jobs myself, because I don't want to put it on to somebody else, just because I'm the boss. Like cleaning the oven, scrubbing out the toilets – but that's a day to day job so that's not one of them. But every once in awhile, say there's a messy accident or something that's awful that has to be dealt with. Much easier for me to deal with it myself than to ask them to deal with it. As I was saying, as a teacher I would never say, 'I have the power to fail you if you don't do what I ask you to do.' I would never hold that kind of threat over anybody. And same thing with the kids that work for me. I never say, 'I have the power for you to be unemployed if you don't do as I want.' Those things seem to me to be examples of power, and that's why I don't feel quite that way. I can't think of the word 'power', without thinking power *over* something.

Not feeling powerful, however, does not mean that Alice experiences herself as powerless. Apart from in romantic relationships with men (discussed later), she feels she is rarely defenseless. If, for example, someone dismisses her as not worth taking seriously, she will withdraw in self-defense and feel smug knowing that she is capable and the other person is not aware of this.

> I can't think of a single other situation where I feel powerless. Feeling the worst for whatever reason, I've always felt that I could do something about it. Powerless or defenseless means I couldn't do anything about it. But there are so few situations that I'm in where I would sit down and say, 'There's nothing I can do about this.' There's always something I can do about it. I don't know what examples I could right now put down. In that situation I told you about when my dad came shopping with me, and the guy kept talking to my dad instead of me, I didn"t feel powerless. Not at all! Not at all! As a matter of fact I never went back to him again, because I thought he was the loser in that situation. If I felt that it had been worth my while to say, 'My dad is just

> here as company and moral support but really it's me that's doing the looking and doing the asking,' I could have very well said that. But I didn't think it was worthwhile. I didn't see the point. So I didn't at all feel powerless. As a matter of fact down deep inside I felt strength in that kind of situation. Maybe a little bit of strength that said, 'I really do know more than you do, because I know that.' What is it? It's the kind of little feeling that says, 'I've got a secret that I know as much as I do about what I'm talking about.' Do you follow what I'm saying? That I can be kind of a little bit smug in that situation. I am not defenseless in any way, or powerless in any way. Maybe smug is kind of a better word. Maybe strong.

Continued reflection resulted in Alice recalling examples of when she has felt powerless in the fact of authority or when she has been at a stranger's mercy.

> Powerless! I'm trying to think of things that are things that I've had to accept. And I go back to things I've done work-wise and with people and with travelling. And powerless is when you are in a situation where you don't speak the language, and you're dealing with somebody who is in a position of authority like a postman, a government, a border-crossing control, even a money-changer. You know. You are completely at their mercy. That's really powerless. You know. And that is an odd feeling. Not really a bad feeling. When you're standing there and saying, 'Okay, what's this guy talking about? Does he want more money from me? What does he want? Is it fair or unfair?' There's not a thing you can do about it. You have to accept it. He's got the power. Or you're on a train and the border-control people come from car to car on the train. Well, you can't get off the train in the middle of blackness in the middle of nowhere, so you have no power at all. They have lots of power. Okay, authority. Powerless sometimes when dealing with authority. Like income tax department of revenue, when I think about my own business right now. Oooh! Here's a good one! Powerless with people who are petty bureaucrats, even here in our own country where we understand everything and know everything. And that will be somebody who will insert their power over you by saying, 'You have to have two doors that separate your washrooms from the rest of your restaurant. And without those two doors and automatic door closures you don't get the stamp of approval. And again, it's down in black and white but doesn't necessarily have to be so. If the guy doesn't like you, he's in a position of authority and power and he does what he bloody well feels like.

Recognizing that rules can be enforced rigidly or not, depending on the personality of the particular person in authority, Alice discusses the encounters she has had with various Health Department inspectors at work. Being subject to 'sticky little rules', not of her own making, make Alice aware that others have power *over* her.

> I have a health inspector that comes in constantly. I had one earlier who was a young guy and really on what you might call, trite phrase as it might be, a power trip. And I think he saw a bunch of young women, and I think he felt a little bit insecure in the situation, so he went as far as testing with litmus paper my disinfectant solution that goes through the dishwasher, etc., etc.. And looked at everything, exerting his power. You know, saying, 'You've got to do this and you've got to do that.' And I've got another guy who's an old guy - not an old guy but he's pretty secure in himself as a person, I'm sure. He walks in, he loves it, he has lunch, he looks around, he says, 'Don't leave those jars of mayonnaise there.' I'll say, 'No, no, the guys just dropped them off. They're only going to be there 10 minutes.' He winks at me and he says, 'Okay.' So what I'm saying is those guys are in a position where they can exert power over me in terms of my business. If he says, 'I'm going to close you down unless you do this and this,' I've got to do as he says. He has that power. But that's all if, if, if. When you first open up, the health department

> has complete override of everything. The city can say you can do this, the development can go through, the fire marshall can say everything he wants to, but until the health department puts their seal of approval on the whole operation, you cannot get a business license, therefore you cannot open up for business. So the last guys to look at the place before you open, which is even stickier than the periodic visits, are the guys who can, and this did happen to me. I can't remember exactly what it was. Oh, I had a butcher block and it's wooden, a real old butcher block, and the surface of it is slightly porous. And I had set up my coffee machine on there and self-service coffee for the customers. And the health department came along and said - like I'm ready to open, everything is ready to roll. And he said, 'Oh! No! You can't open. You've got to have a non-porous surface on top of this.' I was powerless. There was nothing I could do except do what he said. And he was right. It was not unfair. He was exactly right. I'm not sure if I was trying to get away with something or if I had just not realized the situation, but he would not give me the okay. So I was delayed one extra day because of that power he had over me. Not unfair in that situation by any means. But they can draw the line where they want to draw the line. On these little inspections where they come around, they can draw the line where they want to, and be a little stickier or a little less sticky, as they see fit. So that's power. Gee, I'm glad I thought of that one because I really do, when that health inspector walks through the door, he's the only guy that makes me shake. And it's not because I have anything to - oh, here's a good point - it's not because I have anything to be ashamed of or that I'm doing everything wrong or that I feel that anything in my practice is unhealthy or unclean or anything. It's just they have these sticky little rules. And I'm saying to myself, 'My God! One of the girls run in there and see if there's ample paper towels and soap in both the washrooms.' Because soap might have fallen off, got thrown out, it might only be this big; and I don't want to be scolded, you know. Or taking it further, I'm under his power. Whatever he says, goes.

Identifying one more instance of feeling powerless, Alice states her surprise upon realizing that she had experienced such a feeling after all.

> There have been times I think, every once in awhile, and I think everybody runs into this, where you deal with somebody that you just can't seem to reason with. And there's something you want or something you want to do, and for some reason this person won't listen, and a result, dead-end! Dead-end street! I think in terms of when I was teaching and you go to the principal and you say, 'This club that I sponsor wants to . . . . ' And the principal says, 'I'm not listening to anything about that club anymore.' You know. 'But, but, but . . . .' 'No!' I'm using that as an example of feeling powerless in a situation, or defenseless, or what can you do, in a situation where you're with somebody who won't listen? Especially if you want something from them, and you're obviously not going to get it? Again I think that's mostly in terms of material things, not personal things - not related to anything I would want in a personal way, but just material things. Going and asking for money or something. That's it! Now isn't it funny that I ended up saying so much, when at first I said, 'I don't think I can say anything about this.'

Another indication that being nondirect in her communication causes Alice some difficulty is found in her answer to the question, "What do you dislike in yourself?" She interprets her difficulty in relationships as due to her tendency to get 'too involved' - 'take things too seriously.' This can happen, she explains, with family, friends, lovers and employees.

> Another thing that I don't like about myself is that I get too involved. In personal relationships I get too involved; I take things too seriously. With family, with friends, with lovers, I just get too involved. I don't know how else to explain that. It means that I lose myself. I have a tendency to sort of go head over heels into something. And that is like I said, with family, with friends, with lovers. It happens to me all the time. And I grab myself and I say, 'Back off, back off, don't get so involved.' You know, emotionally, I dive in, hook, line and sinker. And I really don't like that about myself. I wish I could, I don't know, be a little more detached. And I wish sometimes that my judgment was a little bit better, when it came to my emotions. But they generally don't go together I guess. I lose my sense of logical reasoning. You know that expression, 'Hind sight is always 20/20,' kind of thing. Whenever I look back on something – it always has to do with personalities and emotions and sometimes it's at work. For example, when I started out there were three of us together. And the two girls that worked with me, they said I didn't reward them enough, which I didn't. I was hard on them; I drove them. But that was because, as I was saying before, I was on one track, and that was that the business was going to work. And I never bothered to tell them when I thought things were going well. I never hesitated to tell them when things were not to my liking. As a result, all of a sudden, the two of them had a big blow-up at me. And I was very hurt by it, so that not until afterwards could I look back and see exactly what it was that they were trying to say to me. I took it completely personally and probably overreacted too then, going the other way, saying, 'If something goes wrong I can't tell them. If something goes wrong how do I pussyfoot around it so I don't hurt their feelings?' And I look back on it now, and I was so personally involved – it was such a big deal – that my reasoning was not what it should have been. And with relationships with lovers I always look back and say, 'My God, were you ever stupid! How stupid could you be, to let yourself get involved in that kind of a situation? To lose your sense of reasoning?' Or something, you know. To be blind. To be blind to other things – too involved! In there so deep and so thick that you didn't see what was going on.

It appears that Alice has indeed heeded the conflicting messages, both direct and indirect, that her mother gave her about being a woman. She explains that she has always wanted to be independent, and not be restricted. This has meant, however, that she had to resolve, at some stage, that perhaps she wouldn't settle down and raise a family after all – that she might end up alone. Only in the past year has she been comfortable with this idea.

> But I always wanted to be independent. I guess that means doing what I want to do, you know. Not being restricted by a husband and family, that kind of thing, I think. I never thought I'd end up as independent as I am, but I just kept getting more and more independent. I feel completely in control of my life right now. I feel like I point my own destiny, kind of thing, and not on any roller-coaster ride that I can't stop. I know that I'm in control of what I'm doing. I think when I was 25 I passed over a stage, you know, which was a pretty bitter pill to swallow, that 'No, maybe I won't after I've done all these things that I want to do, maybe I won't settle down and have a family. Hmmmm. Maybe that white-picket-fence thing isn't going to happen for me.' And I think not until maybe just the past year or so that I've been over 30, that I'm saying to myself, 'And that's not so bad. Because I can really do whatever I want to do.' And I think that if I really had wanted to settle down, and have that white-picket-fence thing, then I would have done it. Because I am in control. And right now I think I can honestly, honestly say that I don't feel any misgivings about the kind of life I live, and about being independent. Alone used to bother me, but alone, now I value the time that I have alone. I really do value it.

Alice explains that her idea of what it means to be alone has changed. When she was younger, alone meant something must be wrong with her. Later she experienced a time of being both alone and lonely, and learned to cope with both. Now she values being alone, seeing it as a wonderful chance to be self-indulgent.

> I think in the past, I think when I was a teen-ager, 20, 21, 22, somewhere around there, alone meant to me unpopular, nobody likes you - 'What's wrong with you that you're alone? Everybody should be with a whole bunch of people.' Since then that has turned around completely. Because right now, if I have a chance - I say a *chance* to be alone, and a little bit self-indulgent, that's wonderful. That's absolutely wonderful! Somewhere in between, I forced some time alone on myself. What I did was I went to Europe for six months by myself. And I said, 'It's gonna be hard,' and oh it was hard. And I spent a lot of time *alone* and *lonely*. And I did that on purpose. It was completely self-inflicted - loneliness on top of aloneness for a lot of the time, where I came out of it saying, 'Yes, I'm okay. What is really important? What really is important?' And it was a good way for me to have figured it out, you know, what's important to me. So, earlier on I thought that alone was unpopular and a lot of time I spent alone was lonely but was not unproductive, in terms that I had a lot of time to just be here, myself, and say, 'Without anybody else influencing you, what is it that you really want and what's important?' And now being alone is something to be really treasured. It's just relaxation. And I'm happy with being with myself; I'm not mad at myself, I'm not fighting with myself. I kind of like me and I don't mind spending some time with me, doing some things that feel real good. That's funny when I think about that now, too, how those ideas have changed so much, you know.

In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?", Alice reaffirms her claim that she likes to be alone. She explains her living arrangements (sharing a house with a friend but living independently on separate floors) and clarifies that having the choice to be alone or in her friend's company is important.

> I'm in a good situation as far as living is concerned, and that's because I have a very good friend of mine who is a fellow, a man. We've always had just a plutonic relationship. I shouldn't say *just* a plutonic relationship because it's one of the best relationships I've ever had. He owns the house. He lives upstairs and has the whole upper floor, and I live downstairs and have the whole lower floor. We live completely independent of each other, but we have each other's company whenever we want it. So we run from the upstairs to the downstairs and just sit and have a cup of tea together or watch TV together, or anything, whenever we want it. And whenever we don't want it, we pretend that the other person doesn't even live in the house. What made me think of that is that he is really an important part of the laughing part of my life. He does absolutely insane things. He came down the other day and I was standing there at my sink, brushing my teeth, and Jim comes down and he says, 'I want you to see my new outfit.' And I said, 'Just a minute, I'll be right out.' He says, 'Just turn your head and look.' I said, 'Just a minute, just a minute,' rinsed out my mouth, turned around and looked, and there's Jim standing there with not a stitch on, a great big leaf from his dieffenbachia plant like this. And I could hardly stand up from laughing so hard. He's just nuts! So, little things like that - just real good laughs - it's just nuts! That's why I brought up the situation that I live in, because I don't know if I would value the time that I have that is alone if the choice to visit with Jim when he is there was not there. I know when I go down into my place, and my little castle, that it's mine, but if I want company, it's real close.

> So I'm not in the same kind of situation as somebody who – like sometimes we're almost roommates, because we have each other's company so close at hand, if we want it. And I'm wondering now, I'm wondering now if my time alone would be as valuable to me if I didn't have the choice. See, for the past year or so I've been so busy, that when I do have time alone it's been so very, very valuable, and much needed. I wonder if I would value my time alone, if a lot of that time I didn't want to be alone – if I was alone through no other option. It's hard to say. Now, I just thrive on having time to myself.

Being an independent women and living alone does bring some difficult moments for Alice, however. She explains her discomfort with her relatives whom she perceives to judge her to be a loser because she is not married, and a failure because she does not have children. This hurts, in spite of her own sense of satisfaction with her life.

> I do get a little bit of a twinge once in awhile, when somebody will say to me, and this is somebody not even from my parent's generation, maybe even just a little bit younger, and they'll sort of look at me and say, 'How come you're such a success in some ways and such a failure in others?' And when they're saying failure they're meaning, 'You haven't lived up to the expectations we all had of you to give grandchildren to your parents, and sort of round out the family.' You know. Christmas time is awful for me in that way. When I find relatives who don't know me, they don't really know what I'm like, but they are sort of looking as much as if to say, 'You're not fulfilling your part of the family situation, are you?' You know. And that, I even get overtly, sometimes. And I get a little twinge of it then. I think that no matter what you do, in a lot of people's eyes you're still a failure. And as much as I say I really like myself, those things, they affect you, you know. It can be a little bit tough. Because they're judging me on other terms – terms that I would have judged myself on at one point in time, you know, when I was younger. If I took myself back 20 years to the age of 12, I probably would have said, 'Anybody who's 32 and not married, is a loser. Really a loser!' And I don't feel like a loser. I sure don't! Sometimes I think, 'Somebody's looking after me, that I should be so happy with my own life, and so content with myself.' Because day in and day out, I never meet anybody – I shouldn't say never meet anybody, but very seldom meet anybody who is very happy with their life and what they're doing, man, woman, child, whoever. Whatever age group they happen to be.

Comparing her life of independence to earlier times, Alice points out that access to birth control has made sex outside of marriage a reality. She explains that her early idea of a woman alone assumed a sexless person, whereas that is no longer so.

> We're pretty lucky now, in terms of when my mother was talking about independence in her age, they didn't have birth control the way our generation has. And it makes it a choice, of whether you – like you can still enjoy your sexuality with the choice of whether or not you want to raise a family. I think what I was saying, myself as a 12 year old looking at somebody who was 32 and not married, as that person being a loser, that person would also be a sexless person. You know, this was the lady who wore the oxfords and the thick glasses and the tweed blazer and had completely relinquished any – oh, it's so hard not to use the same words over and over again, isn't it? You know, but that's different now too. And I think that's only in our generation that that kind of thing has become possible, through all kinds of birth control and through the choice. Like, I can also do all the things I've done and not settle down and not raise a family, but still lead a completely satisfied sex life as well. Through birth control and a whole liberated kind of society, it's possible for a woman to enjoy the kind of sexual freedom that only a man enjoyed before, and have very, very good and fulfilling relationships with

people of the opposite sex.

In spite of her sexual freedom, Alice still retains the notion, instilled by her mother, that it's up to men to take the initiative in relationships, that 'ladies don't do that.' Recognizing that women can signal their interest to men in specific ways, she nevertheless feels restricted in her relationships with men. Explaining her cautious behaviour, she attributes it to her fear of rejection.

> Still, I have retained a lot of the stuff which was instilled in me by my mother, which is that the man always makes the first move. I have always retained the feminine role in that way – the thing that says, 'You might be attracted to a man, but don't come on to him until he comes on to you. Don't call him and invite him somewhere. Ladies just don't do that.' I wouldn't consciously say that, but that's deep inside me, that kind of thing that says, 'That's just the way it is. That's the role you play.' So I don't act first – well, depends on what you mean by 'act'. Because in the most Victorian ages, I'm sure that ladies were batting their eyelashes, which would be considered an overt act. Relatively speaking, I know that a lot of women that consider themselves liberated will say, 'I saw this man, I met him at a cocktail party, we spoke for a few minutes and I found out where he lives, so I called him up and invited him out for a drink after work.' And in this liberated age, a lot of people find that okay – and I wouldn't say that's wrong. That's alright for anybody to do if that's what they want to do. But down deep inside of me it says, 'I just couldn't do that; the man is supposed to do that.' And whether at that cocktail party you'd batted your eyes and did whatever else, and used your feminine wiles, you know, within that framework give that opening for him to whatever. So, I'm not liberated in that way. Not at all. If we can use the word liberated – again, I don't know if I really like that word. The reason I think I brought that up is because I feel restricted in that way. And I look out and I see other women who would absolutely take that other role, and the men that they're meeting up with love it. They think it's great! And I wish I could do that, you know, but that's just not there, you know. I feel restricted in that way. It means that I have not and will never accept the fact that women and men are equal in boy–meet–girl situations. In my logical thoughts I say, 'Why not? Why are men and women not equal in that kind of a situation? Boy meets girl. Boy likes girl. Girl likes boy. But girl does nothing till boy makes the first move.' And logicaly speaking I say to myself, 'Well why not? If girl wants to make the first move, then she should.' And to me, being a woman, I just couldn't do that. And I don't know if this has anything to do with being a woman or not, but I think it probably – well then would I ever feel like a fool if he said, 'No.' You know. If I said, 'I've got two tickets for the ballet. Join me.' And the fellow said, 'Ah, no, sorry I can't,' for whatever reason, then I'd say, 'Ah! I'll never do that again!' You know. Whereas I think when a young man starts asking out ladies, or dating, from the very beginning he faces the risk that she's going to say no from the start. And I realize now what an awful thing that must be for a teen–age boy to have to deal with, that fear of rejection all the time. And maybe I as a 32 year old woman, I can't face that risk of rejection.

In partial answer to the question, "In what ways have you felt powerless?", Alice again brought up the issue of her vulnerability in relationships with men. Explaining that she feels powerless when she feels defenseless or exposed, she reiterates her connotation of power as power *to hurt* or power *over* someone, in this case herself.

> Powerless. Again I have to think in terms of power over, so I have to put that question in terms of where I have felt power over me. If somebody has that power over me, and I would say as far as me personally is concerned, there are a lot of people who have that power to hurt me, you know. I think of that in terms of relationships – personal relationships, with men mostly, where they've had the power to make me defenseless in terms of I just feel hurt. There's nothing else I can feel in that situation but hurt. And that's always a step that I feel I've crossed over in relationships with men, where you stay apart or detached to a certain point. And the minute I felt that this man had the power to hurt me, the power to make me feel hurt, then I knew that the relationship had taken a deeper significance, the relationship was more important to me than it had otherwise been. I know I've even said that to men. I've said at the first instant that I expressed hurt, whether it be, 'You said you were going to call and you didn't,' or something like that, or 'You forgot my birthday,' or anything. I know I've even said it a couple of times, 'See, I'm hurt, and I feel really hurt, and it's significant that you hurt me – significant because I now realize that you have that power. Before this time, before the relationship was important to me, you didn't have any of that power over me. I was myself. But now you've hurt me and I know that you can do it again. You've got that power.' Again, I don't know how I could think of anything positive along that line. I would never talk in terms of the power to make me feel good either. It doesn't seem like the right word. But when I feel powerless I feel defenseless. My guard is down. My nerve endings are exposed.

Continuing her discussion of what it means to her to be independent, Alice describes herself as having the freedom to do whatever she pleases, of being free of obligations to others. Living on her own, and being 'unattached,' she appreciates that she can be selfish in a constructive way, that she does not have to give of herself in a self-sacrificing way that would be destructive to her.

> Now I'm not really talking about being a woman or being a man or anything. But when I say I can do what I want to do, it means from the very minutest detail. Like I can come here and talk to you, I look after my own financial life, as scattered as it may be, I move about freely, I can go wherever I want to go, do whatever I want to do. If somebody says, 'Let's do this,' I can say yes or no. I feel no obligations. I think that's what I was trying to say. Right now I don't feel there's anything that restricts me in any part of my life, in terms of another person, or whatever. I can just carry on without having to worry about too much of anything or anybody, within reason. Like I'm not speaking about being completely inconsiderate to the people around me. But I'm really my own boss. I've thought about that feeling of freedom a lot in the last little while, because I've spent a lot of time with a man. We've spent a lot of time together. I really, really enjoyed his company, and I really enjoyed being with him. And every time that I turned around we were trying to fit time together. And we did. And we've since broken off that relationship, and when I think about it now, my first feeling, even though there was all kinds of sadness and hurt in this relationship falling apart or breaking, I had an incredible feeling of freedom. Like, 'Wow! Now, again I can do what I want to do.' As much as much as I enjoyed being with him, and wanted to be with him as much as possible, I had an incredible feeling of freedom when the situation changed. I don't know what it means though. I don't know. This is something that I haven't quite figured out for myself yet either. This happened quite recently. I am a very giving person; it's not that I don't want to give. Because I really do. I do very well in a giving situation. But, when you're completely free, you don't have to give very much. Speaking I guess in the same way, I can be a little more selfish, and that's kind of, that's okay for awhile. Selfish in a constructive way, not in a destructive kind of way. It's become pretty important to me it seems. I don't think it's a very healthy situation to be a

> completely unselfish person. You know. I think you hurt yourself by being completely unselfish. And so, there I think unselfishness – and boy, when I'm talking about this and I'm trying to describe that kind of unselfishness to you, I see the 'downtrodden housewife', looking after 10,000 kids and a husband and completely self–sacrificing. That kind of unselfishness can be really destructive. And so it is possible to be a certain amount of selfish and it can be constructive. Like those times when everybody should stand back, and pat themselves on the back, and buy themselves a present. Selfish in a destructive way always seems to me to be selfish at somebody else's expense. So if I am with another person and spend a lot of time with another person, selfish a lot of times can be destructive. You know, can be hurtful to the other person. So, being alone and having my freedom, I don't have to worry about that. I don't have to worry about, 'Oh, I just want to stay home tonight and have a bath and read a Cosmopolitan magazine, you know, and just be lazy. But you want my company or you need my help in some way, and I just can't give it.' That's the kind of situation where when you are alone and independent, you don't have to worry about those kinds of things. You don't have to worry about giving anything up for anybody else. You do what you want to do when you want to do it. If you're happy with the things you are doing, then it's not a bad situation to be in. So that makes life a little easier in that way. It seems funny to say, 'If I don't have to consider anybody else's feelings, I'll be fine,' but . . . . .

The issue of freedom comes up again in Alice's response to the question, "What do you value in your life?". After explaining first that she values her family, friends and fun, she states that she values her freedom. Describing how she gives of herself all day long at her work, she explains that being private and doing as she please is her way of giving to herself.

> Gee, I think that I could talk about a lot of things that I value, but they would be things like, I value the freedom to do what I want to do. There'd be a lot of things that if somebody said to me, 'What would happen if I took that away from you?' I'd say, 'Oh no, you can't; I value that too much,' but they wouldn't come near anything that I said before. Those things are top priorities: my family, friends, fun and the chance for my privacy or time alone. Talking about time alone is all the self–indulgent things that I really like – the little bit of pampering myself saying, 'You deserve this.' That's really important to me. If I don't have that my whole life comes on edge. I think it's a matter of a giving and taking situation. I give, give, give, give, give, all day long, and if I don't have that chance just to be good to me for awhile, I guess I get to feel starved or something. I sure don't enjoy my life too much. But if I've got just a little bit of time to – and I know just exactly what I do when I do that kind of thing. I say, 'Okay, what do you want to do? What do you want to do right now just for you that's more important than anything else?' And sometimes it's something as simple as buying a magazine and being able to sit down and read a magazine with an article that doesn't take too much thought and five pages later it's over. And you know, it's not like reading a book. A book I might have to work a little bit harder at, but an article in a magazine and a sweet–smelling bubble bath or an Amoretto and cognac, you know, just whatever. And then after I've done it I sometimes feel like a devil, you know. I kind of say, 'Oh gee, look what you've done, spoiled yourself.' And I do sometimes think too, 'Watch out for those feelings of wasting time. You should be doing doing something productive. You should have something to show for this.' But I think I've kind of grabbed ahold of the idea that I do need that time. And it's a time when I say to myself, 'You're not too bad, you know. You're kind of alright.' Because otherwise you can go day in and day out saying, 'Yeah, I like me and I like the kind of person that I am, but I could be doing a little better here and I could be paying more attention to that and I could be doing that! And it's time to sit back and say, 'Hey, you're doing

alright.' You know.

At the same time, Alice is concerned that she is sometimes insensitive to others' feelings. This was more typical of her past behavior she explains, in her response to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?".

> What do I regret? I don't have many regrets, you know. Anything that I regret is something minor and something that I did out of ignorance of some kind or another. I have become much more sensitive and aware of other people as I've grown up or grown older. And I look back on the times when I was very insensitive. I've felt a lot of hurt myself, and I really do regret the hurt I've caused other people, not being aware of it. But I look back and I'll say, 'Ah, I have done that too to somebody.' Something as small as I've told them I was going to be there and I didn't show up and I didn't bother to call. And now when somebody does that to me I figure that is the most inconsiderate way of acting. But I look back and I say, 'Yes, I really regret the times I've done that to people.' Because I just didn't know any better. And that's a small instance, but it goes the whole gamut of the thing.

That Alice perceives herself as still somewhat insensitive to others and inconsiderate in her behavior is evidenced in her answer to the question, 'What do you dislike in yourself?".

> I'm still having a little bit of trouble with that question, because at this point in my life there isn't much about myself that I dislike. Because some of the things that I'm not good at, I've accepted or something I guess. I'm still sometimes a little bit inconsiderate of other people's feelings. That's something that I used to be terribly bad at. You know when I was 18, 19 years old I was completely inconsiderate of other people. Pure selfishness! Now I'm inconsiderate lots of times, not through selfishness so much as my mind is just somewhere else. But I still have a tendancy to be a bit inconsiderate of other people. I get a bit of a one track mind and I forget what's going on around me. Lots of times with my mother and with my father when he was living, they were the worst victims of me saying – well, here's an example. Last week I had said to my mom – another family member was leaving who had been around Edmonton for about six months – and my mom said, 'Yeah, Jane's leaving, and she's leaving Friday at two o'clock in the morning on one of those really late flights.' And I said, 'Well, good excuse, maybe we should all get together and go out together and have dinner or go out somewhere or something like that.' Just the immediate family, my brother and sister-in-law and Jane and my mom and myself. Mom said, 'Great!' I said, 'Well, we'll all be in touch. I'll talk to the rest of them. You talk to the rest of them. We'll see what happens.' Friday comes along – I had in the meantime talked to the other people. They had said, 'Well, hum-ha, hum-ha, hmm,' not too excited about the whole deal. Well Friday six o'clock comes along and my mother locates me and says, 'Well I just didn't know if I should make myself my own supper and say to heck with you guys, or are we doing something?' And I had completely forgotten! That I hadn't kept her informed – uh! So inconsiderate! You know. I don't do that kind of thing so much as I used to. It's just that I get in my own whirlwind of activity and it was a little detail that I had forgotten. Very important to her though. Very important! She had probably been looking forward to or anticipating something happening for a lot of days and I had just passed it off. It was sort of a semi-passing comment as far as I was concerned. I hadn't taken it quite that seriously. I don't do that very much anymore, but I sure dislike that in me, whenever I do that kind of thing. I really can't think of anything else. Does that sound cocky and conceited?

Coming back again to the original question, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?", Alice again explains her difficulty in thinking of herself as a woman. Unsure about whether or not it has anything to do with being a woman, she explains that she has never been concerned with making a lot of money, or making a name for herself. Rather, she has been concerned with doing something that satisfied her, that gave her a sense of achievement, that made her feel capable and worthwhile. Her currect financial success is to her a secondary gain which she is now learning to handle.

> Wow! I'm trying to look for other aspects of my life, or other parts of my life, or other things that are important to me, and when you say, 'What does it mean to me to be a woman?', I can't – like cause I said right at the very beginning, I've never thought in terms of being me as a woman. I've thought in terms of me as a person, you know. And so, what does it mean to you to be a woman is, in lots of ways, what does it mean to you to be a person. Every time I think about something that is, 'What does it mean to me to be me?', that doesn't have anything to do with me being a woman. That has to do with me being me, you know. I still get kind of stuck on that one, because I keep looking in retrospect and seeing things in different lights and different ways. Whenever I've done something, whether it be from the smallest to the most important thing I've done, I've sort of thought that, you know, what is it that drives somebody to do something, whether it be money, or fame, or self-satisfaction. And I don't know if it has anything to do with being a woman or not, but money has never been important to me. I've never wanted to be wealthy. What has happened to me now is that I've opened up this little business, and I did it for only one reason, and that was for the self-satisfaction of being able to say, 'I did that! That's something that I did.' And I didn't do it so other people would look at me and say, 'Look what she did.' I did it for the same kind of thing on a larger scale, that I might bake a cake. Not for eating the cake, not for other people eating the cake, but just to stand there and say, 'I did that! I made it! I feel satisfied because I did that thing.' And in opening up this little business, that's just exactly what I wanted to do. Lo and behold, I seem to be making money at it, which is something that has put a lot of decisions in front of me that I thought I'd never have to deal with, before. Also, it's made me – like I was born and raised in Edmonton, but I went away and came back. I came back not knowing anybody anymore, being out of touch with old friends and so on, and not wanting to get in touch with them, particularly. And in my little business, I made a name for myself. It seemed everytime I turned around, I was getting quoted in something or having a write-up on my business in the newspaper and so on, and all of a sudden here I was getting a couple of other things out of this little business that I hadn't expected. Especially the money part, because I'd never been aggressive as far as money is concerned. And like I said, I was not a hard-driving business woman, trying to make it in a man's world, or anything like that. I wanted to do this just so that I could stand back and say, 'I did that! I sort of created that little monster there.' That for some reason is the most important thing to me, as far as what I do. I need that. I need to be able to stand there and say, 'I did that! I started that from scratch, and I finished it.' It means I'm capable of doing what I set out to do. It means that I'm a worthwhile person, you know. I've got talents and I can do something, and I can do something I'm happy with, after it's done, too. I suppose it would be possible to say, 'I did that and it's a mess,' but being able to stand there and say, 'I did that and it looks good,' that's just feels great. Just terrific! And I know now that that is so important to me that there won't be another thing I'll ever do in my whole life, unless it gives me some satisfaction, some of that kind of satisfaction that says, 'I did that, and it turned out well.' Because I've taught school for quite a long time, and really

> enjoyed it, but I can't believe the frustration I felt because there wasn't anything really I could put my hands on and say, 'Okay, we started in September and at the end of June we did that.' So little of that! So you might accomplish a fair amount in teaching, but you just can't put your hand on it sometimes, or a lot of the times. Anyway, that's really important to me.
>
> As far as money is concerned, well now that it's there I'm on a little bit of a roller coaster that I don't know anything about. Taxes and investments, and things that I didn't really want to deal with, you know. I'd rather somebody else look after that. And it's a situation that I'm forced into dealing with – my financial situation. That's about it. That's the difference that that has made. Basically because everybody knows and understands the fact that if you don't deal with your money wisely it will go to the government – you end up paying it out in taxes. And with a few wise investments and wise dealings as far as the tax man is concerned – and I'm learning more and more about it all the time. But that's the situation where I'm having to learn about that, just for my own good, and I will never be a whiz-bang at that kind of thing. Whereas other people go into business specifically to have those kinds of situations to deal with. And it's not really my cup of tea right now. Maybe it will be. So what I'm thinking of doing is opening up another little restaurant and maybe it will struggle for awhile, and it will be my tax write-off or something like that, I don't know. We'll see. But then again, I don't think I really knew how important money was to me until I had it to play around with. And as soon as you have it to play around with, you say, 'Well, what am I going to do with this?' It's never been important to me to be wealthy, but anyway, that's neither here nor there. Who knows?

Alice has not always had a sense of what she wanted to achieve. She explains that when she was a young woman leaving high school, entering university was a 'non-decision' – something other people thought she *should* do but which was not particularly important to her. She went into education because she had enjoyed teaching swimming in high school, and she majored in Home Economics because it was a very feminine pursuit and something she was good at. Mostly, however, she was interested in the social aspects of university life.

> I was young when I came out of high school, and I didn't know what I wanted to do and I was in a situation where everybody said, school people, family, everybody said, 'If you've got university entrance, then you should go to university, because so many other people don't have the choice.' And I went into education because it seemed like a non-decision kind of a thing to do, you know. Go into first year education, and first year turned into second year and so on. I was never really keen about univeristy. I went along with it and did what I had to do to get reasonable grades and carried on. The social part of university was more important to me than anything else. Much more important to me! I enjoyed the meeting all kinds of new people, and sitting around drinking coffee for hours and hours, and the social functions that happened on campus. That was much more important to me than getting an education or pursuing a career. If I'd have told my family that at the time, they probably would have died. But looking back on it now, that's certainly what was number one at that point. So basically I went to university because I didn't know what else to do. But going into education was my idea. I had dabbled in teaching when I was in high school; I taught swimming. And I really enjoyed it. I got right into it. Also, I had always been good in Home Ec., a very feminine kind of thing to be interested in. And taking education and majoring in Home Economics seemed much more attractive than going into the Faculty of Home Economics, because I was getting a sort of a two-way street there. I would come out with an Education degree, so that if I found that I didn't want to teach Home Economics, I would have as much of a

> well-rounded situation as I could, otherwise. But I really can't say that I was thinking down the road as far as actually teaching school. University was not a means to and end for me at all. It was a very good place to be at the time. And I suppose I could very easily have been taking Arts, majoring in who knows what else, because I took as little of the Home Ec. courses as I could, and as much of the Arts options as I could, because I wasn't really, really deadly interested in anything in particular.

Alice entered teaching with the same lack of commitment. When she left teaching it was not because she disliked it especially, but because it did not feel satisfying. Although she did not realize it at the time, looking back now she understands that teaching did not give her a sense of accomplishing something tangible.

> Gee, when I look back on it now, I think that that's how I started teaching school too. After I finished university I took a year off and skiied and played for a winter in Jasper. And then took the teaching job, basically because if I didn't use my teacher's certificate it would not be permanent. And it just seemed like of all the choices that I had, that was something that I'd better do. And where did that influence come from? It didn't come from my family. Not at all. They wouldn't have said anything if I'd just continued on and done something else at that point, I don't think. So, I never really had a strong ambition, or a big striving for a career kind of feeling. Never! It seemed like I just fell into it. And when I decided that I didn't want to teach anymore, everybody said, 'Well you must have been really sick and tired of it.' No, I wasn't. At that point I was really enjoying it. I was in a good situation, in the teaching situation I was in. It was something that I'd always wanted to do. I always said that if I taught Home Economics, I wanted to teach in a high school and teach only foods, and have classes where they were very casual and everybody was happy and the kids learned something as well. And by the time I had finished, I had a really good situation; I was close to what I had always wanted. And as soon as I got it to that point, I sort of said, 'Well I'm here. Now what? It's not giving me what I want. Or it's not what I want to do.' So I up and left, packed it in, lock, stock and barrel. And that's when I went to Europe for six months. I think that I have realized now, since that has become important to me, that I need to see some results of what I am doing. I need that satisfaction that comes from standing back and saying, 'I did it! There it is!' And teaching seemed like never-ending. Like I said, the beginning of September to the end of the semester you'd kind of say, 'Uhhh.' Then you'd get a minor break and be starting at square one again. You know. And except for the super contact with all the great kids, you know, really talented and dynamic young people that I met up with - that part was great - but that something, of having to have something that was a tangible accomplishment, I really needed that. And I guess it wasn't there. But I say that now. At that point I didn't know what it was that wasn't happening.

Going to Europe for six months was initially the same kind of non-decision for Alice that going to university had been. However, it became for her a lesson in getting to know and understand herself. Further, it became a turning point: she stopped waiting for a man to give meaning to her life, stopped seeing herself through other's eyes, and began to think about what she really wanted for herself.

So, I had six months in Europe alone. I put myself in a position where, out of time, money, enjoyment, pleasure, love and friendship and all those kinds of things, I put myself in a situation where what was really important became clear. Certain kinds of pleasures became really clear to me. Oh, seeing things and doing things and meeting people, I realized as well that money and possesions were not important to me at all. It didn't matter; I lived the whole six months with possesions like this, and no money whatsoever. And you have to make real basic decisions, like 'Am I going to eat or am I going to go to this museum?' You know. 'Am I going to sleep on the train so that I can do this, or am I going to have a comfortable place to sleep, and sacrifice whatever else? You know. You make some real basic decisions, and I'd never been in a position to do that before. And I also realized that the love of my family was really important to me too. Because for all of the friendships and everything that I'd left behind, I couldn't wait to get back to my family. And I hadn't even lived in the same city as my family for years. My family still lived in Edmonton. But they became very important to me. And when I came back, this idea of opening up a restaurant had somehow surfaced in my head, and it became something that I just had to do. You know. But about needing to accomplish something tangible, I don't think I have ever even verbalized that until right now. You know, and put that all into perspective. But looking back on it now, yeah, the satisfaction that comes from where I am right now has a lot to do with, again, not the money and not anything, but just that feeling that 'I did that, and I did that on my own, and it was something that I really wanted.' I didn't leave teaching saying that I needed to accomplish something, and I didn't even go away saying to myself, 'I've got to get my head together,' like so many of the other people say. Or, 'I've got to find out what's important to me,' or 'I've got to sort out my priorities.' I didn't go with that intention. But when I came back I sure knew that that's what I'd done. When I left I didn't know what I was going to do. It was probably about the same as when I went to university. I didn't know. But I knew that this was something that I could do. I didn't have a driving desire to go and travel on my own. I just knew that that was something that I could do. It was exploring an alternative, and I think that same as my decision to go to university, it was probably the lesser of the things that I did not want to do. Going to university was not something that I really wanted to do, but given all the other alternatives, it was the best. Leaving teaching and not knowing what I wanted to do, going travelling seemed like the least unattractive of the alternatives at that point. I think at that point too, when I left and went travelling, I was wondering too if – I think, you know, year in and year out before then I'd often thought to myself, 'Well, tomorrow you're going to meet a man and settle down. Tomorrow you're going to meet a man and settle down.' And then all of a sudden it was, 'Well it looks like I'm not going to meet a man and settle down, and I don't want to stay here and I don't want to do this, so, what can I do? It sounds real miserable and unhappy when I talk about it now, but it wasn't all that miserable and unhappy. It was pretty confused and discontent, maybe. I would say that I might have at that point been feeling sorry for myself that I had not met a man and settled down. And again, I was dealing with that, 'In whose eyes am I looking like a failure? Is it everybody's else's or mine or whose? What is it that I really want?'

Once Alice had set herself the goal of returning home and opening a restaurant, this became her focus almost entirely. Feeling she had finally decided to do something that was important to her, she happily sacrificed everything else – self-indulgences, personal relationships, etc. – in order that she might achieve her goal. In the process, she continued to learn about herself. Looking back on her life, Alice realizes that she never took her involvements in university and teaching too seriously because always, in the back of her mind, she believed that falling in love with the right man was more

important. Thinking of how fulfilled she feels today, she feels sorry for women who are trying to live their lives according to someone else's expectations.

> But the idea of opening a restaurant became so important to me, that again, looking back on that now, I had no time or no desire to do *anything* else. I wanted to do *nothing* but get this underway. That I really wanted! So I guess for the first time I was doing something that was really important to me. Yeah, I think so. At the ripe old age of 31. It meant as well that I was going to not be concerned about all those other alternatives, you know. Like meet a man and settle down. Because, well, it meant to me, this was what I was going to do, and this was what was really important to me. And that everything else was going to be put aside, absolutely everything else! Whoa! And was it ever! For the first time in my life I went through – I guess it was a little over six months before I got the place opened. Actually it was a year, but it was six months when I was actually working on getting the place so that it was going to be working. A steam-roller I was! I left a turf a mile wide, you know. Just throwing up everything on either side of me. Everything, everything was sacrificed when I decided this was what I was going to do. Especially, as I say, my own self-indulgence or being selfish, there was none of that. Like in terms of looking after myself, I didn't have any time. Every cent I had went into it, so as far as my personal possessions, everything was sacrificed. And it really was a good feeling, because I think whenever I had done anything else before, it was always a 'but' in the background, you know. Going to university was ta-da-ta-da-ta-da, *but*, you know. Teaching school was good, I enjoyed it, but there was that little 'but' there. Going to Europe was, 'Well, yes it is something that I want to do *but* . . . ' When I went into this there were no 'buts' whatsoever. Gee, as a matter af fact, there even was a fellow that I was going out with at that time, and I didn't have very much time for him. And I even knew it at that point. I said to myself, 'If this was at any other point in my life, if I was doing anything else, I would have fallen head-over-heels in love with him.' But it was a one-way street for me. I was going to get this thing going, and it was more important than anything, even more important than meeting somebody, settling down, falling in love, that kind of thing. And that's saying something. That's really saying something for me, because I don't know if I've made it clear, but that has been always really important to me, you know. That was always I think in the background. When I look back on that stretch of time, just two or three months before I opened up, boy, I didn't have time for anything. Just a one-way street! Wow! But I sure don't regret it, that's for sure. Cause I sure have learned a lot about myself. Really have learned a lot about myself! Just like all these things I've been saying: like what's important to me and what's not important to me, and how I use what I've got, whether these be personal resources or any other kind of resources, to get what I want. And I know exactly how far I can give in most situations, and how much I expect to take, as well, you know, whether they be personal situations or business situations. I've got a pretty good idea of where my line is. I know exactly how much I'll sacrifice for what I want , too. The day I opened up my business I had $7.32 in my purse, I was borrowed up to here from the bank, I had two girls that I'd been paying already for about two weeks out of borrowed money, and the first day of finally opening up I had to borrow from them out of their purses to have a cash float for the day. That's how far down the line I went. Everybody said, 'Boy, have you ever got guts.' I said, 'Yeah, that's all I've got. Nothing else.' So, that's good. Really good. And I'd think about a number of people that are women, in life situations that they are not happy with, you know, really not happy with. Talented, intelligent women who, somewhere along the line somebody said, 'Well you're nobody unless, or you haven't made it or you haven't fulfilled yourself unless you are married and raise a family. There are some who are married and are raising a family, and have now given up or who are trying to fit everything in all at one time. I don't know what that's like. I imagine that's a matter of sorting out your priorities as well.

Although it took Alice most of her adult life to take herself seriously, she does not regret the past. In answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?", she explains that she has learned from all of her experiences, even the ones that at the time caused her pain or frustration. She wonders if perhaps there might be a plan for her life that makes all of her experiences meaningful.

> As far as regretting any steps I've taken or any things I've done, I don't regret anything. In terms of my life, in terms of the point in time when I went to university, when I left home, when I took time off to do nothing but ski, I can't think of anything in my life pattern that I regret. At all! Even at this point, I get a feeling every once in awhile that there is – I'm certainly not a religious person, but – that there is a pattern or a plan for everybody. And that all of the things that didn't seem right for me years ago, all make sense now. Little experiences that I seem to be able to draw on. People that I've known that I've learned something from, that seem important or seem that it was meant to be, you know. I'm trying to think of something that puts a finger on what I'm trying to say. I think about when I was 23, 24, I almost married a man who was a policeman. And I lived in the small town of Grande Cache at that point. And at that point in time, I thought this was the be–all and end–all, and that I should live forever in a small town and be a policeman's wife. And he was transfered and our relationship fell apart because he met somebody else. And I ended up being the jilted one, and I had so much resentment and everything. But it wasn't much long after that that I said to myself, 'Somebody's looking out after me. I was not meant to live in a small town and live the restricted life of a policeman's wife.' But I would have done it. Given all my choices, I would have done it. But I sure learned a lot from it, you know. I sure learned a lot from the time that I spent with him, about law and the people who live on that side of the law all the time. It gave me insight that I otherwise would not have had, and through some luck or the stars or whatever, I was able to be in that situation and to get out of it as well.
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> Now that has to do with people and relationships. I'm trying to think of some other experience. Take something sort of mechanical like, what can I think of? Bookkeeping, for example. I have absolutely no inclination towards bookkeeping. But one time when I was in university I had a summer job, and it was a great job, and the only thing that was rotten about it was I had to do a certain amount of bookkeeping all the time. And it was drudgery, and I didn't like it. But now, 10 years later, I open up my own business and here I have enough bookkeeping experience so that I can look after it, you know. When it gets to the point where it's more than I can look after, I'll be paying somebody to do it all for me. But, it was just a little bit of something that was back there that I hated at the time. And if you had said to me, 'What did you not like about, what did you regret about this summer job?' 'Well I regret that I took a job where I had to do so much bookkeeping, even though it was a small amount.' But turn that around and it ended up being worthwhile in the end. So, what I'm trying to say is that any resentments or regrets that I might have had at any given time, all seem to so far have had their place. I can't think of anything that I out and out regret, regret. I can't think of any decisions that I have made where I would say, 'That was wrong!' I don't feel that way at all. That's kind of a good situation to be in, isn't it?

Speaking about the present, Alice becomes aware of how she has changed. In answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?", she explains that she does not value her business, now that it is a success, to the same extent that she valued it when it was still a goal. Thus, having accomplished her goal, she is faced with a decision about

where next to put her energies: should she expand the business or should she take some time out for her personal life? The change in her values and the choice she now faces became clear to Alice as she talked.

> When I reached one year of operation, which was in October, I said, 'Wow! Look what happened!' And we had a big celebration and I felt really good about it. There were a few other minor stepping stones but one year, and the way I felt about the whole operation, was terrific. It was just great! Since then, I think that the reason that I haven't talked about the feeling of, 'Yes, I've done it and it's tangibly done and I can see it,' is because now I'm going on a little bit further, and I'm looking at a second one now. So I'm going into another, 'What do you do when you say: I've done it; look what I've done and it's worked?' You take a little rest, take a little deep breath and go on. I guess. I'm not really sure yet. But that's why I'm kind of in a different situation as far as my business is concerned. I aimed at it so that I could say, 'Yes, that's what I've done,' and I've got there. I value that accomplishment but it doesn't fit in any of those things that are – because if I was to sort it out as far as if somebody said, 'What could you live without? Your business or your fun?' I would say, 'I could live without my business; I can't live without my fun. I can live without my business; I can't live without my laughs.' You know. I don't think it fits into those things, and I don't know exactly where it does fit. But it is really important as far as what I do from minute to minute to minute. Wow! Maybe at this point in time, now that my business has been operating for awhile – yeah, I think this makes sense, that all of those other things along with the death in our family and a few things that have happened, I say, 'I have accomplished what I wanted in this phase of my business, and right now it's looking after itself, kind of thing. Now all of these other things that I neglected as I was setting up and getting going, now those things are real forefront. And my business, although it has been 99.4 percent of my life, it has reached the stage where it's now in the back burner department. And the personal things, the things that are for me, like the love of my family and my friends and my laughs and my time alone, are important now. My business? It's there. Now it is, anyway. And I'm on the verge of going into another phase as far as my business is concerned. But I don't have the drive for it. It will come. But I don't have it right now. Seriously, when I think about it now, I've been negotiating for about three months for another space. I've been trying to work myself up in terms of the creativity of it all, the decore, the setup, the whole thing, the way it's going to be. Try and work myself up as far as the mathematics of it are concerned, working out square footage, people, blah–blah–blah, all that kind of stuff. And the fellow that I've been negotiating with has just in the past little while been given another offer – an offer on the whole building, which would take me out of it completely – there would no longer be any space for me. And there's a whole lot of me that says, 'Oh boy, I'll just go skiing once a week. I'll just take off a Tuesday and a Wednesday every now and then. Maybe I'll go with a couple of friends down to see Willie Nelson this weekend in Las Vegas. Why not, you know?' And I start thinking, 'Hey, wait a minute. Those things are, really, seriously, those things are more important to me right now.' They weren't always. When I was getting ready to open I valued that achievment, I'm sure. It had to be, you know, I'm sure that's what I would have said at that point. Because fun and friends and family were really taking a shit–kicking at that point. So, I don't know. It's kind of fun, to sit and talk about this kind of thing and put a whole bunch of my thoughts into order, that haven't been there. Or ideas or feelings that you know that are there, but when you start to put them into words they all of a sudden make sense.

Alice explained in greater detail why she values her family and friends, and how she came to understand how much they mean to her. The idea of values changing comes up

again when she talks about valuing her family.

> What do I value in my life? I value my family. They are always loving. They are always there. When I was being my most narrow-minded, straight down the line towards getting what I wanted as far as my business was concerned, my family were there saying, 'What can we do for you?' Saying even in some ways, 'We're not sure you're doing the right thing, but we'll stick by you as much as we can.' When I was making demands left, right and center, they were right there saying, 'We're not sure we understand, but we'll help.' You know, just super! I shouldn't start talking about that. I'll start to cry. My dad just died this past year. My family is so important to me now. And 10 years ago, 15 years ago, I might have considered them a burden, or 'Why don't they leave me alone?' kind of thing. But now - and as we were saying, things change, and what's important to you now is not important to you at another time. A thing that is so very different about me now is that way back then, let's see, when I was a young teen-ager, my family was looking after, my mother especially was looking after me. And now because my dad died, I'm looking after my mother. It's an incredible turn-around. My brother and his wife and little guy are in that too; I shouldn't make it sound like it's just me. That's a pretty heavy thing. I never thought I'd be feeling this way - so strongly about how important my family is. And I don't feel that looking after my mother is a burden. No. Not at all. Not at all. And maybe if I had contemplated 10 years ago, the fact of one or the other of my parents dying, it would have been, 'Well what effect is this going to have on my life? And how is this going to change me?' And I know that my thoughts would have been very negative. But now I think nothing but positive thoughts when I think about spending time with my mom. I don't feel that that is a burden or sacrifice on my part that I don't want to make. Of course it's a sacrifice of my time, but I don't feel it as something that I don't want to do. It's a sacrifice that I want to make. So, anyway. Family, that's really important.
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> And friends - that's really important too, because I describe myself a lot of times as a gut-spiller. If there's something that's bothering me, I talk about it. If somebody says to me, 'You seem troubled. What's wrong?', they better have half an hour, you know. Because I'm a gut-spiller, and if I don't have somebody to talk to, whether it be about good things or bad things, just to share, you know. That's really important to me. Very important! It's one of the things I missed when I was travelling on my own. Because you meet people and you travel with them, and sometimes after four of five days travelling together you feel like you know those people well, but it's never really the same as close and dear friendships, kind of thing. That's important.

Alice also explains more thoroughly why she values recreation and having fun. She believes that life without laughs would be too serious. Further, she perceives a connection between fun and freedom, explaining that she has sometimes felt restricted in relationships with people who prefer serious endeavours to playing, laughing and acting foolish.

> Recreation and playing - that's important to me too. I know myself fairly well, as far as how far I can push myself work-wise, until I have to have some play. And that can be simple. It doesn't have to be anything specific. But that's really important to me. It means just that I like to have fun. I really like to laugh. I really, really like to laugh! And I like to do things that I enjoy doing so much, and hopefully with people that I enjoy doing it with, that it's really fun. And I think that the only way I can say that I know how important it is to me, is that I know how much I need it if I don't have it. Everything becomes too serious and too structured. I have to have some fun. And gee, it's hard - I don't know how to describe this need that I have to have fun. I think that I like to play, and - that's why my business is so good too. I'm in

> this little restaurant most of the day, and joking around with customers and with the staff and we do absolutely insane things. And it's so much fun! It's just great! And again I wonder how a lot of people go from day to day to day and never laugh. So that I value. And if for some reason – here's another thing where the freedom thing comes into it for me. There have been times where I've spent time with a man, or with another person, who for some reason restricts my fun, by making me feel like – well, just by spending a lot of time in serious endeavors – things that might be enjoyable but are more serious, such as going to the theater or going out to a really nice place for dinner, and that kind of thing – very, very enjoyable, but not out and out fun, you know. I like to have fun. I wish I could think of something really specific. Fun in the restaurant is, we just start joking around and start playing with customers, teasing, it's hard to describe. Or tobogganing or something like that, that really makes you laugh. It's so much fun, you just laugh, you know. How else can I describe it? It's funny, when you take something like that and try to describe it, it really loses in the translation. But again, hard to describe how valuable it is until that freedom to laugh and act foolish, act really silly, is taken away from you by the restrictions of somebody else, who doesn't feel that it's appropriate behavior. You realize how important it is every once in awhile to be absolutely foolish. It's great!

That Alice's enjoyment of fun and foolishness balances a busy work life, full of responsibility, is verified in her answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?" Her sense of balance, she explains, benefits her business life, her social life and her personal life. Trusting this sense of balance gives Alice a good feeling of confidence. Further, she has confidence in the decisions she makes and attributes this to her intelligence, which she also values.

> What do I value in myself? You caught me at a good time, you know. You're talking to me next week and I might say, 'Not very much do I value about myself today.' But I'm feeling good today, so I'll say it. The things that I value in myself will come easily. I have a good sense of balance, for myself and for most everything – for myself and for my business, for my personal relationships. I always have a good sense of balance. I really do value in myself that sense of balance. I have learned to go with my hunches. When something inside me says, 'Slow down,' I slow down. When something inside me says, 'You've given enough; it's time to take a little,' or 'You've taken enough; give a little.' I really feel I have a good sense of balance. And as far as my staff is concerned, we work very, very close to each other, and I think I have a real good sense of the balance that is fair play, as far as they're concerned. I think if you were to ask any of them what kind of a boss I am, they would say, 'Well she may have her faults this way or that way, but she's really fair. She has a good sense of balance in that way.' That I value in myself. It means that I'll know when to stop something, or I'll know when to start. Like I was talking about the idea of maybe starting up this new business. But all of a sudden the prospect of it not coming together right now seems good, because I can play some more. I'm not going to force myself in either direction. I'll know what's right when it happens. When it comes down to the day that the man says, 'Okay, here is our final offer. Sign on the dotted line.' I'll know then. I'll know exactly what's the right move to make. Because I have a pretty good grasp on my own balance, my own personal resources. I know when I've got enough to pour into this, or whether I've not got enough to pour into it. If I don't, I won't go with it. And if I do, I'll go with it lock, stock and barrel. Because I'll know the time is right. It means to me as well that I will never be totally a self-sacrificing person, whether it be in personal relationships, in love relationships, or with my family or anything. I know that I'll give as much as is needed, but I won't be a

> self-sacrificing person, I won't play the martyr. Like I was talking about before, I know what's important to me, and I know how much I need to get, whether it be of anything - of rest, of love, of fun. I have a pretty good feeling for that. That's what that means to me. And it gives me a real good feeling of confidence that I know where I stand. And that I know I can make a decision on that basis. And that I know that I'm probably not going to regret that decision. You know. Gee, I haven't ever thought about this before. This is all just coming out, just happening as it happens. But that, oh boy, it's so important!
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> What else do I value in myself? I value my intelligence. I don't think of myself as an intellectual or a genius, but I have a common sense kind of intelligence that I value. Again, I suppose it has to do with a confidence that I know that I'll be able to stand my own ground in situations, and that I'll probably make a decent judgment on something, or a worthwhile decision after weighing out all the alternatives.

However, Alice explains that the length of time she takes to make a decision, while not disturbing her, can be the cause of distress to others. In her answer to the question, "What do you dislike in yourself?" it becomes clear to her as she speaks, that it is not her tendency to make decisions slowly that she dislikes. Rather, she dislikes the consequences this has for others - those people who are waiting on her decision. She also dislikes feeling guilty for keeping these people waiting while she makes her decision.

> I said I trust my own judgment. And usually when I make a decision, whether it be big or small, usually I'm happy with the decision I've made. But in the same way I spend a lot of time not deciding, which is annoying to other people. It doesn't bother me for the most part, but a lot of other people would rather I stand my ground immediately - make a quick decision rather than a slow decision. But I have a tendency to say, 'Well, let's ponder that for awhile', and awhile and awhile. That I do with everything! Absolutely everything! I don't like the fact that it is annoying to other people. Because I'd like to be able to come to decisions more quickly for them. Not for me; I'm happy with long, drawn-out indecision, because like I said, I know that I'm going to come to the right decision. It just takes me awhile. Because to me it's just taking the time to make the right decision. And like I said, I feel quite good about the fact that I trust my own judgment, and that in the long run I will make the right decision. But that might be just procrastinating, just putting things off, as far as other people are concerned. They'll look at that and that's annoying to other people. I don't know how else to explain it without repeating myself. Well probably if I can think about something in my business, it would be even from the smallest thing. Like, 'Boss, what are we going to do about this thing that keeps acting up? Because it's annoying to us that this piece of machinery is always acting up.' And I've got a little something to weigh out, like should I get it fixed or should I but a new one or whatever? But I always say, 'Well, just hang on a minute. I'll get to it.' First of all I'll get to the space in my mind that will let me deal with that little problem. And you see, then they're saying, 'Ah, come on, this is driving me crazy! Do something! Right now! Because I want this little piece of equipment to work, right now.' The decision about whether or not to start a new restaurant fits in here too. Yes, it sure does. And I decided now, just in the past week - let me tell you, it's gone from highs in one direction to highs in the other direction - and I've decided that I'm not going to go to another one, not now. I'll wait. I may as well enjoy what I've got right now. But I've kept my staff on the hook. There's been a little bit of carrot in front of the nose business, as far as they're concerned. Because there's a better position for everybody, if I open up another place. Everybody takes a step up, gets

more responsibility, gets more pay, and so on. They've all known that I've been weighing one way and the other, and it depends as well on a few things not of any control of my own. But it took me a long time to come to that decision, and they were saying in a lot of ways, 'Well decide, because I'm not going to stay here and work for you if this is not the case, if there's not something bigger and better coming.' And I've known I can't really say, 'Oh, hang on, hang on.' I don't say that. I say, 'Well, it may happen but it may not, and that's all I can say. If you want to stay and take the gamble, or leave and take the gamble, I understand.' But that's annoying to them because they would like to know. And the decision has been completely up to me. But it's the consequences for them that I don't like. The consequences! Yeah. Yeah. Actually if I look at the things I'm going to actually have to deal with, in deciding against the second operation, one is: the guy who has been trying to set up the building has looked upon me and my operation as the key business in there. He knows that my business will be a success and will draw other kinds of businesses into the building. Because people will come, especially to come and have something to eat. They probably would not come to any of the other stores or retail things that are going to be in there, specifically. Just for one they wouldn't. They would come just for my restaurant. And then the whole building and other operations benefit from that. And also it sets a tone – the kind of food that's served and the kind of atmosphere it is. He has been looking – oh, the guilt is welling up in me right now! Because he's been looking for other businesses compatible with mine. He would not have leased out space to anybody who was incompatible with my business. I know that he can find another restaurant along the same lines, you know, knowing some of the outlets in HUB and so on. There are other people who would be available. Why am I worried about that? I mean, business is business. I'm not obligated to anything until I sign on the dotted line. One thing I have to deal with is: how do I say to him after all this time, 'Sorry!' Because his last words when he walked out of my place yesterday afternoon was, 'But you are still the key business in this complex, in the building.' And the other thing is the girls. The two key girls that I have, one of them in particular, she's a very, very talented lady, and she's got lots of spunk, and she's only 20 years old. But she's talented and intelligent and not meant to be buttering bread and making sandwiches and chopping vegetables for salad. She's better than that; she's got more to offer. She reached her limit as far as working, 'Well, I'll just work at this restaurant job for a little while.' She reached that limit long ago, but has stayed because she didn't have any better offers, and there was a possibility that she would either be in the management of the little place that I have now or in the up front, out front service part of the new place, both of which would have suited her very well. And I'm going to have to say, 'Sorry,' after all this time, 'you stayed around probably hoping, but it's not going to happen.' So that's one thing. But the other girl I'm not too worried about because she does very well by the job right now. She's sort of my second in command right now, so as far as the pay and everything – the work gets a little mundane after awhile, but she's paid well and it's stimulating because there's people around all the time. So anyway, here I am, justifying my position. I'm trying to say, 'Oh, he'll find another restaurant for there,' and so on. You see it's just the consequences as far as the other people are concerned. I know I've made the right decision for me.

Another aspect of being a woman for Alice (an aspect which she didn't consider initially but which she became conscious of after the first interview session) is her body image. She explains that when she is with a big, strong man, she feels that she is 'a picture of a woman,' adding that she has a traditional stereotyped idea of men and women.

> I've been thinking that I didn't answer about a lot of the really simple things, real basic things in terms of what it means to me to be a woman. Because I said I didn't see anything about me being a woman that was different from being any other being, person, male, female, whatever. So you said let's talk about what it's like to be you. But since then I was thinking that, especially just in the past week when I've been spending a lot of time with this man who is a very big man, and he is physically a big person, a strong person, and I feel very, very womanly with him. I feel the picture of a woman when I'm with him. And in a lot of ways, that's a little thing that it means to me to be a woman. And that's sort of an important thing too. It feels real good. I have pretty traditional, pretty standard, what do you call those things? Stereotypes, or whatever, of what a man is and what a woman is, you know. And when I'm with this man who is 'the picture of a man,' in terms of he's big and strong and stuff like that, I feel the part of the woman, you know. Now, if I was with a man who was not strongly masculine in terms of being 'a picture of a man,' I wonder if that would make me feel less of a woman. Hard to say. Anyway, that was one of those little things that I was thinking about.

Alice refers to her body image again in answer to the question, "What do you dislike in yourself?". Stating that she feels unattractive when she is fat, she explains that being fat is something she has always had to struggle with. As she talks Alice realizes that she no longer feels this to be a big concern. She goes on further to explain, however, that she also doesn't like the fact that she talks about not liking herself, believing she loses respect for herself when she does so.

> Okay, I'm going to try to not be too high-faluting about what I'm going to say. What I don't like about myself is I'm too fat. I fight it all the time. I feel unattractive, that's what it means to me. Being fat feels unattractive. It's as simple as that. There have been times in my life where I've thought that that was related to not being able to control myself. Like, 'How come you can do everything? How come you have a grasp on every part of your life, but when it comes down to sitting down and eating and drinking, you don't have control?' I don't feel that way now. But I have felt that way at times, you know, that how come I had so much self-discipline in so many ways, but not in that way? For some reason I don't feel that way now. Okay, that's something I don't like about myself. The other thing is, is that quite often I say so. And I wish I wouldn't say so. If I don't like being fat I wish I'd keep it to myself. I suppose what that means is that if I say something like that it comes across sounding like I'm digging for somebody to say, 'Oh no you're not,' or come across with some other compliment that will make me say, 'See, it's not so bad that I'm fat because someone is talking about some of my better qualities,' kind of thing. So it sounds like I'm not accepting myself. And I don't like to see that in other people. I lose respect for somebody who calls themself down in some way or another. I don't like coming across to somebody as somebody who doesn't like themself. I probably lose some respect for myself at that time too, I don't know, or something.

The final experience Alice discusses in relation to being a woman is feeling burdened because she is a woman. She explains that the expectation that she is *supposed to* like babies is a burden because she doesn't like them. On the other hand, she realizes that while the expectation that women are *supposed to* like cooking and enjoy entertaining doesn't feel like a burden to her, it does to some women.

I think too that I get those same feelings that everybody does, that because you're a woman you have a lot of burdens that you would otherwise not have. I think a lot of expectations are still put on women, as far as traditional things. For example, well, because I am a woman I find that lots of times people expect me to like babies. I don't particularly like babies. I like babies but I also like puppies, you know. But because you're a woman you're supposed to automatically be drawn to the babies in a room, or something. But I'm not. So who was it who said I was supposed to like babies? I don't know, but I don't like them particularly. Maybe if it was my own I would, but that's a position I don't particularly like and that's part of being a woman I think. There are a lot of those other things that are supposedly part of being a woman that I really do like. And that's probably one of the reasons why I was - like I like cooking for people and I like doing those kinds of things. Probably there are lots of men who like doing those kinds of things too. But I probably wouldn't have become proficient at cooking and entertaining for people, and being a hostess, if it hadn't been an accepted role for me as a woman. You know, if it hadn't been something that seemed right, about being female. You know, nice girls go into home economics and are good cooks, and like babies. I don't like babies. I don't think that I particularly got a lot of reinforcement for cooking, but it did fit, and I like doing it, you know. What we can draw out of that, who knows, eh?

But a lot of things that other women might find a burden, I probably wouldn't. Like in terms of in a situation where you have a group of people and there's entertaining or hostessing that needs to be done, I enjoy that kind of thing. Whereas, I think in terms of my sister-in-law, my brother's wife, and she really doesn't like that kind of thing. And my brother puts those expectations on her. In other words, whenever somebody comes over, he expects her to get up and make tea and look after those things, while he gets into the conversation, you know. And he puts those expectations on her - that's a burden in her mind. Why should she have to do that? But I don't find that kind of thing a burden. That's what I think I'm good at. Anyway, those are some of the things I thought of; those are things you can actually grab onto, as far as I'm concerned. It's part of what it means to be a woman.

Another burden Alice perceives as particular to women is responsibility for birth control. She is aware of the suffering of young women experiencing unwanted pregnancies. Seeing this as one of the consequences for women of increased sexual freedom, and understanding also that many young women who get pregnant have been neglected, Alice nevertheless takes a fatalistic view that the responsibilities women take and the suffering they experience are part of being a woman.

Talking about things that seem burdens and so on, I'm probably just like every other woman who says, 'We, as women, will always have to make the decisions and make the controls on family raising and birth control and that kind of thing.' I mean it may change, because of medicine and science and so on. But as it stands right now, it is always the woman's responsibility. And you know, you sit back and you say, 'Why me? How come I have to be the one that's worried about this?' And that's complete and utter woman! You know? There's nothing we can do about it. That is being a woman! You know that's one of those things that if you can put that pat answer on, that is being a woman! You have to take that burden. A man doesn't. Let's just say birth control, and not the family raising. When a couple has decided to raise children, I think at that point it's not a woman's decision, but probably a couple's decision, if they want to raise a family. But if pregnancy and children are not wanted, in any kind of a situation, it's generally the woman who has to look after it, suffer the physical consequences, or whatever it might be. And you know, in this day and age of science and everything, there's still a surprising number of unwanted pregnancies. You know. It just blows me

> away! Every time I turn around a girl is saying, 'Does anybody know who I can call?' You know. That burden is put on the woman. Sexual freedom is all over the place, but these poor little 17 year old girls, they still need looking after, you know. Some are along the line of being neglected. And because they're women they have to suffer. So, anyway, that's definitely part of being a woman, isn't it.

It is clear that Alice does not identify her concerns for women's burdens and suffering with the goals of the Women's Movement. Rather, she speaks of her disrespect for women who are vocal on women's issues, refering to them as people on bandwagons. Part of her difficulty with the Women's Movement seems to be the idea that recognition of women's accomplishments involves judging women on different terms than men. Asked, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?", she replied:

> A lot of people get on the bandwagons of movements, whether they be women's movements or any kind of movements. And unfortunately I think the Women's Movement has had a lot of people who would get on just about any bandwagon, for a cause, and fight for it. But there was a lady on TV, on 60 Minutes just this past Sunday night, and she was an American Congressman, and she's 74 years old or something – I can't remember her name just now. But she has been involved in the Women's Movement since long before there was anything called the Women's Movement. And I looked at her, and I thought, 'Now there's somebody that I really have a lot of respect for. She's not jumping to a cause for any other reason than she's seen. Inequality – for 50 years she's seen inequality. She knows much more about inequality than I do. And so I sometimes find it a little bit difficult to sympathize with the so-called Women's Movement. I think that a lot of people involved are just in it to be in a movement. Or that's the impression they can give to the general public – me being part of the general public. Because I've never been involved in any women's rights movements or anything like that. I'm just thinking in terms of the more vocal things that I heard in the early days, you know, in the ban-the-bra days and so on. There were so many people who were very vocal and saying a lot. And I couldn't hold any respect for them, anymore than I could for people who were involved in other movements at that time, whatever they might be: legalization of drugs or blah-blah-blah. They obviously had a lot of things to say, and probably a lot of valid things to say. I wouldn't say that I don't respect the Women's Movement as such, but I think that what I don't respect is a lot of women going into a movement like that and pointing out women who have done so well, *for a woman*. You know? It becomes inequality as soon as you say a Women's Movement. And lots of times I get the feeling like I, or I did get the feeling, although I haven't really thought about it much lately, 'Why don't they just shut up! Because we women are losing respect.' You know. There's no control over what can be said and what can be quoted. And I'm not saying specifically that I have no respect, I'm just, I don't know.

Explaining her own personal dislike of being labelled or having assumptions made about her, Alice drew an analogy between the Women's Movement, and what she terms as the 'healthfood bandwagon'. She responds negatively to people who assume she's in the health food business, just as she does to those who assume that she must be a feminist because she has a successful business. Feminists to Alice are hard-driving, aggressive women, making it in a man's world, and this is definitely not her. She does not mind

being perceived as strong, but we know from her initial answers in in the interview, that Alice very much relies on being 'feminine' to make things happen.

> I do often get people come in and say, 'Did you have any trouble doing this? And how did you deal with this? And how did you deal with that?' Because it seems that, not necessarily in my line of business, but just being a woman in business, that I've had some very, very strong ladies come to me with a great deal of admiration and say, 'Now, uh . . . . ' and they start delving in what I'm doing. Now I don't see too much different, people like that, than I do from – now here's a parallel I'm going to try to draw on and I don't know if it's quite right. The kind of food that I serve in my restaurant is healthy. It's real; a lot of it is very simple; it's real food. Everything is home-made; everything is made right there on the premises. But people will walk in and they'll say, 'Ooh, health food!' And I'll say, 'No!' I say, 'I use Dixen's soup base, loaded with MSG; I use white sugar in my cake; we drink coffee; and you have your choice of caffine or no-caffine tea, whatever you like; we serve corned beef and pastrami which are . . . .' Okay, what I'm trying to say is, I get a lot of fanatic healthfood people who will walk in the door and they're on the healthfood bandwagon. And they drive me crazy! Because they'll say, 'Ooh, you're using *white* sugar! And is there *meat* in the soup?' And it's sort of, 'I'm somebody,' they're trying to say, 'because I know about this kind of stuff and I'm fussy and selective about what I'm doing.' They are on the healthfood bandwagon. That's what I call that. It's a healthfood movement, and in that healthfood movement I am not a purist. I am a businesswoman. In other words I'd say, 'I'm not going to use organically grown vegetables because they cost an arm and a leg, and it's no good for my business.' And that's just an example. Okay. So I end up defending my way with the health food fanatics. Okay? And I'm easy in terms of what I do. I say, 'We use grainy breads, fresh vegetables, fresh dairy products, and so on. It's healthy food!' But in the same way, I find somebody will walk in the door, and they'll say, 'A little lady who did it all on her own. She must be a feminist. She must be a hard-driving, aggressive woman in a man's world.' It's not me that says that. It's I think just the words, the fact that there is a feminist movement saying, 'It's a man's world,' which I don't see. Am I making sense? Because I do get quite fired up about that. I'll say, 'Just because I've done this on my own, and dealt with all the things I had to deal with, doesn't mean I am a liberated woman,' if there is any such thing, or if there ever was an unliberated woman. It's a slot and a bandwagon that I don't want to – maybe it's the words that's the problem. Maybe it's the difference between health food, and what I consider healthy food. Maybe it's the difference between calling something a movement and saying, 'Hey, I know a lot of strong ladies who really know what they're doing. Let's not put them in any slot. Let's not be purists about this. Let's just say I know a lot of strong ladies and I'm one of them, and I respect what they're doing.' The same way as I have a healthy respect for healthy food, but I'm not a health food fanatic by any means. So maybe I balk a little bit when I hear words like feminist movement, or whatever. Because I think in terms of people who are saying too much and being quoted in the wrong places and calling it a movement, are saying that women are different. Which is true but in some ways sort of defeats its own purpose or something. And again, I balk and get my back up when I hear people talking, 'This is a health food restaurant.' You know. I don't want to be put into any slots. You know.

In keeping with her beliefs as to the irrelevance of the Women's Movement, Alice believes that society offers women as many breaks as anyone else. She believes, in fact, that society is becoming too pro-women. As she responds to the question, "What do you think of this saying: 'It's a man's world'?", Alice's confusion on the matter begins

to take form. On the one hand she dislikes women being judged as having done well *for a woman*, the assumption being that they are not equal to men, not capable people. On the other hand she believes that women who get jobs or promotions simply because they are women – token women – do not deserve their success, are not equal to men.

> I think it's baloney. I really do! And I think I'm saying that completely honestly. I'm not saying that as a feminist or as anything else. I just think that is a bunch of baloney. Because women will get as many breaks as anybody else, sometimes because they are women. Because now there is such a strong movement, even though things will stay so much traditionally the same, there is a strong movement pro-women, that I would say in some ways the general public is overcompensating a little bit. Or saying, 'This lady is doing so well, and she's a *woman*. She's doing so well, *for a woman*. And in a lot of ways it's like people about their feelings about races, down-trodden races or whatever, that they'll give women lots of breaks *because* they're women. Do you follow what I mean? 'We need our token woman in our law firm, and we'll give her a fair amount of responsibility to show that we have nothing against women.' Now she may not be a very good lawyer, but they took her into the firm and they'll give her lots of breaks because she's a woman. I don't know. That's something that I haven't thought about and I may be contradicting myself there somewhat.

As she continues, Alice talks about her own experience, clarifying her position. She explains that she knows strong women who are self-directed, and men who are 'falling apart', which indicates to her that it is not a man's world. She believes, however, that women growing up with certain expectations might not assume a place in the world for themselves. In terms of her own experience, Alice maintains that she perceives no barriers to achieving her goals and in fact believes she is respected for her work and success by men in the same line of work. Thus she concludes that *her* world is not a man's world.

> But anyway, it's a man's world. I constantly run into, and it could be it's because of the kinds of friends I have and the people I deal with, I constantly run into women who are strong and have got their shit together, and men who are falling apart and don't know one end from the other. And I can't think of any part of this world now that isn't open to both men and women. So it's not a man's world. The only way that it might be a man's world is that women have not grown up to be as aggressive as they might be because of Mom's expectations and somebody else's expectations, that the girl would have to be a real fighter to come out aggressive business-wise, aggressive profession-wise or whatever. But I don't think your business is a man's world or a woman's world, I don't think my business is a man's world or a woman's world. And I don't feel any barriers. I think that whoever said that, whoever first coined that phrase, saw some definite barriers for themself, in whatever it was that they wanted to do. But I don't see any barriers to myself in the things that I want to do because of being a woman. Other people might. If you talk to other people in different walks of life and different ways of life, they might see more than I do. But I personally don't see anything in my sphere of experience that makes it a man's world. No. As a matter of fact I think that I find that from the men who are in the same line of work that I am in, I get a lot of respect. I really get a lot of respect! They don't think of it as a man's world. They don't see me as stepping on their

toes. And I don't know if that respect has that qualifying statement in it, 'She's done so well, *for a woman*.' I don't think so, but I don't really know. That's hard to say. But I don't see anything in my world that makes it a man's world.

M. Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a 41 year old woman, born in the North-Western United States of Irish and Hungarian heritage. She was the eldest child and only daughter in a family of 9 children. Her mother had two years of college education and is now a retired secretary. Her father also had two years of college education and was a radio operator with the Merchant Marines. Elizabeth's parents are at this time divorced. As a child Elizabeth worked on a tobacco farm, as a cashier and as a nursing aid and technician. She graduated from university with a Bachelor of Science in nursing, after which she worked as a nurse in several American cities and in Vietnam. Returning to the U.S. she nursed part-time and then spent two years in graduate school, working toward a Masters degree. At age 30 she married and moved to Canada. Six years later she was divorced. For two years she lived in a common-law relationship. Today Elizabeth works as a secretary in a government corporation, living on a yearly salary of about $13,000. She belongs to and works with several feminist women's organizations.

Asked, "What has it meant to you to be a woman?," Elizabeth first answers that in spite of the difficulties of being a woman, she experiences it as rewarding. Her suffering, she explains, has resulted in growth and understanding. She believes that most men would not appreciate what she has learned because they have been socialized to avoid suffering and ignore emotional experiences.

> Boy, that's a hard question to answer. I think more rewards than problems. Because despite all the difficulties of being a woman I think that being a male, as males are today, would be a great loss. Especially in emotional terms, and in terms of sensitive things. I think that a great deal of growth comes through suffering and I think that a lot of what men do is to avoid suffering. And I think they accomplish this quite well in a lot of cases. By being taken care of by women, one after another, their emotional growth is really retarded. According to the male stereotype, probably the kinds of things I have learned by being a woman are not useful. I've learned to understand underdogs, I've learned to understand people in pain, I've learned even so far I think, to hear the emotional things in the world around me. And music - I can't imagine, for example, that a man can really understand a symphony - most men - although many of the great symphonies were composed by men. I don't know where these kinds of men are anymore. But I don't think they have the possibility of having a great deal of feeling. And it has even occurred to me that during the periods of time when I am shutting myself off from the pain around me, I was shutting myself off from everything. And I couldn't hear music; I couldn't feel deeply for things that were going on, experiences that I was involved in, anything.

Elizabeth explains in greater depth the nature of her suffering as a child. She was given minimal love and maximum responsibilities, being expected to take care of eight younger

brothers, an alcoholic father and a mother who "withdrew into semi-deafness."

> I value the suffering that I have been through very, very much. I think probably the greatest suffering I have been through is recognizing the amount of exploitation that has happened in my life, and I think the coming awareness that it wasn't a question of being loved, it was a question of being used and a facade of being loved. The love was not there in practical terms. As I grew up this was true. I was used by my family until I went to college. And I learned a lot of things very, very early about being very responsible. I view my parents now, and I always viewed my parents, I think, as very immature people. It seemed to me very early on - I can remember even from the time I was eight or nine years old, I would look at what they were doing and think, 'How stupid!' And then as I grew older, more and more - I'm the oldest of nine children, the eight younger all happen to be boys - the responsibility for taking care of them, for making decisions about them, was mine. My father withdrew into alcoholism quite early. My mother withdrew into semi-deafness that she refused to cure by using a hearing aid, which she could have but did not do. So that the awareness of what was going on with the children was mine, it was not theirs. And hence of course the responsibility as well.

Elizabeth coped with the demands placed on her by relating her hardships and suffering to the belief of the Catholic church that suffering brings reward. Her expectations for herself to be loved were low, and therefore she experienced kindness shown by others outside her family as uncomfortable. She does feel a special affection for little boys today and thinks it may be because they were her only source of love in childhood.

> I think that for a long period of time I saved myself psychologically because I related it to my religious beliefs. And in terms of meeting the ideals of my religion, which was Catholic, it was an okay existence in those terms - in view of the fact that such hardship was meritorious in the long run. I think that stays with me to a certain extent and maybe colors some of my feeling that suffering does have its own reward. I don't know what it is like, for example, to be a loved child, or cared for in any way. I can remember, for example, a couple of occasions when people in the neighborhood or related somehow to my family would come and recognize something I had done and make a comment about it, as some sort of accomplishment on my part. And I was just very, very uncomfortable. I couldn't cope with it. And I think I still feel that way. I have trouble relating to people that are very kind because it's too painful. I would just rather they not be kind. It brings out too much of the pain that's been experienced by not having people that were kind. And my expectations are rather low in terms of the rest of my life. For example, I will be associated with people that aren't kind. Because I think I don't look at kindness as something I deserve, because I never got it. At least if you can't feel it, it's not there. As far as I can tell. So it wasn't there. And then a lot of the mothering of the children was my job. Certainly meeting their physical needs. I don't think I was ever any good at meeting their psychological or emotional needs. I felt for them. Little boys to this day are just very, very precious to me. I can remember being very attached to my little brothers and certainly I have more affection for little boys than I do for little girls because of that experience. And it's possible that they were my source of love in my childhood.

The abuse Elizabeth suffered as a child extended to incestuous behaviour on the part of her father. She feels that more damaging to her, however, was the impact of 17 years of exploitation by both parents, who expected her to take care of them as well as their

eight other children.

> I think that the exploitation in my family did extend to a certain degree of incest. I don't think that it was a major, major thing. Like it doesn't seem to me as the big traumatic event that everybody makes it out to be. And I think that the reason for that is that I view the incest behavior as a very minor part of the whole lot of family problems that were never taken responsibility for. And it's sort of like the symbolic gesture of using the child rather than sorting out their own problems. And that event in itself I don't think was as damaging to me as the 17 years I spent taking care of my family – eight brothers and two parents.

Asked more specifically what she thought the effect on her to have been, of being an incest victim, Elizabeth replied:

> The effect of being in an incest family and being the victim – only lately have I began to see that I was the victim – probably accounts for some of my difficulty in feeling equal in my neighborhood. The experience was humiliating and embarassing, and I recall feeling envy for the little girls who were loved and protected. They were persons with value that I did not have. Still now I usually prefer to be invisible in my neighborhood, and I don't take any leadership role in any organizations I belong to. I believe this came from a feeling of being a 'ruined' person. I'm overcoming a lot of this now, but only since the Rape Crisis Center shocked me with the pronouncement that it was not my fault. I still recall vividly talking to the volunteer on call after hearing a Rape Crisis radio report which identified incest victims as such. I had called up dumb-founded – did I hear correctly? The volunteer was an exceptional young woman who zeroed in on precisely where I was at on the issue. I had a hard time believing that there was a knowledgable group of people who thought I was innocent, and who understood the pain I had experienced as the 'guilty one.' When I look back on this experience I admit I feel more anger at my mother than my father. After all, it was her job to care for us children, not my father's. But I also feel angry that she allowed my father to victimize her and did not take a stand against his abuse until I insisted and pressured her to do so.

Elizabeth explains that as a young child she never felt angry toward her parents. Instead she felt sorry for her mother having to cope with nine children. She sensed that her school achievement might be a chance for her mother to vicariously experience a life outside of her marriage and family. Further, they held in common their belief in the Catholic doctrine outlawing birth control and upholding sacrifice. Neither Elizabeth nor her mother were aware, she thinks, of the psychological benefits of limiting a family in order to provide emotional nurturance. She recalls contradicting a nun in pediatrics class in college, who was glorifying the large family as ideal, knowing from personal experience that it was not so.

> As far as my parents were concerned, I never felt really angry with them. I felt sorry for my mother because of her having nine children to deal with. I thought a lot of times that my mother lived through me. My mother's quite an intelligent woman. She would help me write, she would help me learn to write correctly and she would help me do things to succeed in school and she would go over lessons with me and stuff like that, and she sort of participated in that way in my life. Sort of outside the home. And I think that

> maybe because of my Catholic bent at the time, as was the practical situation, I never expected anything from her in an emotional sense. My mother's reason for having nine children was that she could not use birth control and that was part of her – she was a convert to Catholicism. And I don't know what it was with her, but her adherence to Catholic doctrine was much, much stronger than my father's, and she had just turned to the church when she was 21, when she married my father. Because of my loyalty to the church I believed at the time she was right in what she did. And in a sense I suppose she was. And I think that I just absorbed it all as part of being a good person – living up to the church standard, which is what she was doing. And the whole issue of limiting your family so that the children will have more psychological and emotional benefits was never an issue in the Catholic church. And I don't think that I ever recognized it as a need of children until I was in college and I was in pediatrics. I remember when I was in pediatrics in college, I made some of the most personal statements I ever made in my life. Then we were being taught by a nun and of course she would go on glorifying about these large families. And one time I stopped her and I said, 'I come from a large family and I want you to know it is not all that great.' And of course everybody looked at me because it was a personal statement and because I was of course contradicting what she was saying. The picture they were giving of the large Catholic family as being all rosy, I felt was very, very wrong. It was not true, and it was something I couldn't sit and say, 'That's true!'

Recalling when she first became aware of the existence of the emotional dimension of human experience, Elizabeth explains how fascinated she was by her discovery and how difficult it was for her to comprehend what it meant. She believes that her parents' neglect of this aspect of their children's lives has deeply affected her brothers as well as herself. All of them have decided to have no children or few children, and although this may relate in part to their fears about passing on a genetic disposition toward deafness, Elizabeth believes that the pain of their own childhoods is also a factor.

> But of course four of my brothers are deaf and that sort of complicates things too. I think that all the children in the family, that's brothers, mostly who are having children, are very, very careful. There are very few children. All of the deaf boys are limiting their families – three of them have no children, one does and his two children are okay. But the others – and their reason is, 'We don't want any deaf children' – I think it's also because they don't want a family because their memories of childhood are so painful. I can remember when I was in college, one of the first books I got ahold of, the whole emotional scene was just something I had no concept of. Rollo May's book, what was the name of it? It was one of his early books, *Man for Himself*, or something like that, by Rollo May. And I remember reading that and I was so fascinated. I remember writing out practically every sentence for myself. And then I started reading something, I think, was it Carl Rogers that wrote on *Becoming a Person*? I ran across that book when I was in college. I remember reading it and reading it and reading it, trying to comprehend what this man was talking about.

It was not until Elizabeth went away to college that she realized how dependent her mother was on her for support. She explains how she almost left college to return home and take care of her family, and how the dean of her school, a nun, forbade her to do so. Thus, just as Elizabeth experienced support from the church doctrine in terms of

her self-sacrifice, it was again from the church that she received support to carry on at college and build a life of her own. Elizabeth explains that the Catholic notions of self-sacrifice and the common good are still meaningful to her. She realizes that some therapists might see her as masochistic, but she perceives the extreme egocentism advocated by other therapists as ugly and limited.

> And then when I went to college, I didn't realize I think until I got to college, how much my mother leaned on me. Because I'd get letters every few days from my mother telling me all her problems, and it would go on and on. I had made a decision at one point while I was at college - I was about 300 or 400 miles from home - to leave college and go back, get a job and start taking care of my family again. And the dean of the school where I was going called me in and told me that in no way was I to do that. She didn't go into all the sociological factors of my parents having made a choice to marry each other, to bring up a family and so forth, but she said, 'They will have the grace to deal with it. You will not, so stay at school!' So I did do that. I was very fortunate that that nun took such a strong stand. But I got through my childhood on my religious beliefs - well, it was the whole Catholic notion of self-sacrifice. My life was one of self-sacrifice and I recognized that. And yet in terms of people who are held in very high esteem by the Catholic church, that is the earmark of their life. And of course most of the time I was going to school from nuns who had sacrificed their life, given it up, taken on the habit and were living for God. And I think that I don't know where my alienation from the church in that sense started. It probably took about 10 years after I got out of college. But I think that psychologically it would be called a masochistic thing that I was into, feeling a great deal of reward because of my living up to some ideals that I had been taught. And I admit, I personally, to a certain extent, do agree with some of them. I am still put off by people whose whole concentration in life is themselves. I can't buy, for example, a therapeutic model that says to me, 'To be healthy and normal you have to be self-centered and selfish.' It depends on what you mean by that. Like the Catholic church notion of the common good. I still don't think that I'm that important in terms of the universe, to center my energy in life on myself completely. I think to a certain extent I have learned through having a nervous breakdown and so forth, that I have to. And I suppose to a certain extent that gives me permission to do so, to put some energy into myself. I don't know how far I could take a very egocentric kind of a life. It just seems very ugly to me, and limited.

The idea that Elizabeth should attend college grew from her close association with the nuns who were her teachers. She explains how she was rewarded for achieving in grade school and that the recognition and encouragement she received from her teachers motivated her to continue to achieve. She recalls, too, the pain she felt when her teachers occasionally became annoyed with her and withdrew their approval. She concludes that she was willing to conform to whatever they expected in order to keep their approval. At the same time Elizabeth felt that her academic achievement, which was well known in her community, to some extent redeemed her family.

> The idea to go to college was I think a very strange thing. I was living in Seattle until I was in fourth grade. So first, second and third grade I took in Seattle from French nuns. When the French nuns taught us we were separate, it was a separate school, just girls. When we moved to Connecticut I was put into a parochial school that had both males and females. They were at least a year behind in terms of school work to what I had been, so I immediately, when I went into fourth grade, was ahead of them. I was at the top of my class. Now I think that the kind of reward I got for that year was sufficient to motivate me to stay at the top of my class, so I did through high school, so that I was eligible for scholarships. And because the high school I went to had fairly strong academic standards and I had a lot of push from the teachers to go to college. It was not from my family. And yet I can't really say that was true. I felt that my academic achievement was very well known, for example, in the community – that I was always at the top of my class and because I won a number of awards and all that kind of stuff. I felt it was a redeeming thing for my family because my father was a known alcoholic and that kind of thing. It was just sociologically in our community, our family was very, very much at the bottom, and my academic achievement was a redemption for them. But I can't say that was my first motivation. I think my first motivation was to get recognition. And the teachers spent a lot of time with me and gave me a great deal of encouragement, which I'm sure I rewarded them for by my need for it. I think it was my only affirmation that I was a person of any value. That certainly was my identity and something that I very much hung on to. I think it was very, very important. I can remember a couple of occasions when a couple of my teachers became annoyed at me. That was a cause of great pain. I was not able to stand back and say, 'Well, do they have the right to be annoyed at me?' and so forth. It was too painful. I would just conform to whatever they wanted. And I'm sure that I do that a great deal, although much less so. It's hard for me to relate in many ways, how I behave back to how I really behaved then. But then I think it was a source of warmth; it was a source of recognition; it was very, very central having that kind of confirmation.
> But I think that there were a couple of other occasions when teachers withdrew their approval from me, and that was so painful to me. And I was very unable I think, to take much criticism either. I didn't get much, but I found it very hard to take.

Elizabeth believes that her teachers' interest in her came partly from their awareness of her difficult home situation. She describes how various teachers paid special attention to her and how, with their encouragement, she excelled and won awards. And yet, although the concern and support of her teachers compensated to some extent for the lack of love she felt in her family, Elizabeth was still emotionally deprived.

> Like when I left Seattle when I was in third grade and went into fourth grade in Connecticut, my teacher from third grade wrote to me. I asked her if she would write to my new teacher, which she did, and the two of them developed a project – like everybody in each class had a penpal from coast to coast, which was really fun. And then this particular teacher at third grade came up to see me. I think I was about 24 or 25 years old. Right now I think she's still alive; she's very old. But either she reacted that way to all her students or I was very special to her, I don't know. It's hard to tell.
> You know, it's hard to sort out. Like I think that my teachers' response to me was partly their awareness of my home situation. I think they knew the kind of responsibilities I had, and I think that they were very, very sensitive to me. Very idealistic people that I had. Well first of all until I was in eighth grade it was nuns, and after that it was a really good school in Connecticut. The teachers were very idealistic. For example, my Latin teacher was marvelously encouraging to me and very personally interested. And she would send me to this and that and the other contest. And my Italian teacher was a woman that

> oddly enough was very tuned into me. And part of the reason I think is she had been in an automobile accident and part of her face was gone. She was very deformed, disfigured in her face, and this kind of thing. And she was very, very much behind me personally, as well as in school. She would have me write plays for her in Italian that she would help to get staged, and stuff like that. And then my science teachers were always ready – of course I was always interested in science too. But I think that the teachers that I went to school with were excellent teachers and I was very fortunate there. Before that, when I was in grammar school I had a series of years in which I won the city writing award. And of course the nuns were so happy about that because it was their parochial school that year, which was logical because the big emphasis by the nuns was on English grammar and composition. Like when I got into high school it was nothing – English was nothing for me after having taken it from the nuns. And I think that just achieving what I did, I think when I got into junior high I had a big lull. It seemed to me all of a sudden that the boys were catching up and I had trouble competing with them in math and physics, and that has stayed with me. I still feel very, very poor in math and physics. But it was emotionally deprived experience. Like I started working when I was 14 and I worked all the time during school and summers, in addition to taking care of my family and keeping my studies up so that I could be top in my class. It was a very disciplined life. And I think because of those kinds of pressures I didn't say to myself, 'Well, you're missing love. You don't have any deep emotional attachments.' And things like that. And in a sense I think I had a certain amount of love for my teachers, to sort of compensate.

Elizabeth recalls, too, that her teachers seemed to recognize her anxiety while her parents did not. Apparently sensing her pain and fear of being exposed, they did not mention her problems. Similarly it seems that an older man whom Elizabeth worked for sensed her need for a father substitute, and supported her without speaking about her situation. Having since suffered a severe depression, Elizabeth understands now that her fear of exposing her pain was related to her fear that something was wrong with her – that she would be seen by others as inadequate – as blemished or marked.

> I would like to say something though. When I was a junior in high school and also a senior in high school, I think I went through periods of tremendous anxiety. I don't know what they were about but I'm pretty sure my teachers recognized them even more than I did, which astonished me, because I never thought anybody would be able to see that in me. It was something that completely went by my parents and family, for example. They were never aware of what was happening inside of me. But it astonished me that a couple of my teachers did. For example, I was selected because of my academic record to give a speech at graduation, and it was a very difficult time for me. And they recognized that, but my family did not. And then when I was working on my junior and senior years in high school I was working for a man who was about 55, maybe about 50, hard to tell, and he became very friendly with me and very, very supportive. A very sensitive person. And I recognized even while it was happening that he was sort of a father substitute for me. And I think he did too. It was never said between us but then when I went to university he wrote me until his death. He died of a brain tumor. But none of these people said anything personal. It was almost like they recognized that I couldn't talk about it. The feeling that I had was threat, actually. I didn't want them to know. I think it's the sort of thing where the pain I was feeling, I thought if they became aware of it they would think less of me. That I wouldn't be the same to them. I didn't want them to know. And I think that carried over very, very strongly later on, because when I had a severe depression, I felt very much that this was a real blemish in my life. I

> read a book somewhere called, I can't think of the word, something about ruination. Marking. And I sense that even now. And of course now I recognize that people in society are treated that way if they are in trouble. Particularly women – there's something wrong with them. But even at that age when I was probably about 14 or 15, I knew that if they knew how much pain I was feeling, there would be something wrong with me. And I didn't want them to know.

To Elizabeth, going to college was a logical next step, in light of her academic success in high school and her high motivation to achieve. Most importantly, however, it meant a chance to get away from her family and from the provincial attitudes and prejudices of small town life.

> I think the main thing for me about going to college was getting away from my family. And I recognized not only getting away from my family but getting away from the town where I lived, because where we graduated a third of my high school class – it was a very large high school class – would go to college. There were no colleges in town. Very few of them would ever come back to the city. So once you left that town, on a scholarship or any way to get through college, you were out. It was a big, big move for everybody, and very significant. If I hadn't been able to get out I felt I would have died, because I would have had to stay in that little town. And that would have meant staying stupid, staying provincial, staying prejudiced by all the little town attitudes – becoming part of that. And also I think that the teachers that we had that were promoting the people that wanted to go to college, they put it out as a promise. And they never said exactly, 'Well if you do you can get out of this mess,' but it was a promise towards becoming a person sort of thing. You had to get out. And I remember going back to that town periodically and being very, very much aware of how psychologically, intellectually, emotionally retarded and everything the people were there. Their life with their little political scene was 30,000 people. And I thought it was very deadly. Now how much of my feeling was a projection off of my family, I don't know. And how important it was to get away from my family, I don't know, but it was important.

The experience of college was good for Elizabeth, in spite of her being a scholarship student amongst women from wealthy families. Again, her teachers were excellent and she was excited to learn. Nursing seemed like the right choice of careers for a number of reasons: it was compatible with her religious ideals, with her need for achievement, with her ability to take care of people and to be responsible, and with her interest in science. For the first two years her courses were demanding and she was challenged. Once she began the nursing practicum, however, she was disappointed. Intellectual stimulation was replaced with professional training, beginning with properly shined shoes.

> When I got the scholarship that I got and went to college, I went into nursing. And it was a different experience because all of a sudden it was all women and most of them were from very wealthy families, because the tuition was very, very heavy. I think it was about $2500 a year, and I had a full tuition scholarship. Again, very excellent teachers. Extremely, extremely good teachers. And it was a good experience in college.

> Once I got to college the nursing was compatible with a lot of things. It was compatible with my religion, with the ideals of my religion; it was compatible with my need for achievement; it was compatible with taking care of people and being responsible. I guess all the things that I had become identified with. It was compatible with my interest in science. That was while I was going to college. After I got out of college it's no longer compatible because you're not supposed to think very much – as a nurse that is. But in college you are. And I don't know what happens to people when they're 17 or 18, but I was aware of a change in my thinking, conceptual kinds of development. And I remember one of my teachers in high school, a man that I had for English, told me one time, 'You think you have thought. You haven't thought anything yet. You wait. You will think.' And I think that was very much my motivation to get out. I wanted to think. And when I got to university I was put into a senior level philosophy course with seniors, with philosophy major students. And I remember taking my textbook home and reading it and discovering for the first time in my life I didn't know what it said. That was so exciting! It was really great because I had no idea what every sentence meant. It didn't make any sense at all. It was like studying Greek. And then of course these students I was in class with were so exciting to me because they were saying all of these things that I couldn't comprehend. It was really quite exciting. The first two years when I was in college I took most of my courses, and then we took our chemistry with the chemistry majors and biology with the biology majors and all that kind of stuff. I think it was after that we narrowed down – that it was just women. And then we went on to our clinical work in pediatrics, obstetrics, as a group of women. Before that was very exciting. After that, well, intellectually it became much less demanding. I remember the first class I had in my nursing practicum. It was called *Fundamentals of Nursing*. I was so shocked because there was about 15 minutes spent on how to properly shine our shoes. And I knew then intellectually something was going to happen to me. That I had to adjust to this. And it never started. It became dogmatic after that. The challenge, the opportunity to argue, all that was gone because now you had to apply your science. And in many cases there was no rational basis for what you did. You would become a professional and do these things because that's what professional nurses do. Probably even to this day.

The shock of being trained to be a professional nurse – one who would obey orders without question – was not the only difficulty Elizabeth experienced in college. In answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?," she first responds that she regrets not being more able mathematically. She explains that she found physics exciting but was hampered by her difficulty with math. She wonders if her difficulty has something to do with being female and with a possible differential development of the brain according to sex.

> One of my great regrets in life, I think, one of my biggest regrets, is that I'm not more able mathematically, because, like when I was at the University of Washington I was switching to physiology. And when it came to descriptive physiology I did very well; I was always at the top of my class. When it came to the mathematics I was really stumped. Like physics is exciting, but unless you can do the math you're stuck. I would like, at some point, to try to overcome that handicap, but I don't know. Maybe it's my brain. There's something wrong with my brain, Cheryl. Like when they had that thing in the paper about some evidence that boys actually do better in math than girls – at a certain point they excell – I could relate to that very strongly. And I thought, 'Well, maybe that's what happened to me, that my brain just didn't develop in those directions.' Anyway, I regret that I can't do math.

By in large, however, Elizabeth found college and nursing to be a positive experience. She continued to excell and win awards for her academic achievement. In fact her most difficult time was the period after college when she had to adjust to the fact of being a junior nurse with no support or recognition.

> I think my greatest difficulty that I ever experienced was in my first two years after college when I had to make the transition from getting all those rewards for academics to just sort of standing on my own two feet, and putting in eight hours of work, five days a week for a paycheque and not really getting very much support or recognition, being a very junior person. It was a very hard transition for me.

The nursing program was also good for Elizabeth in that it taught her to recognize and accept patients' emotions. Unfortunately, however, it did not allow for her, as a nurse, to recognize, understand and accept her own feelings. Thus Elizabeth's pattern of repressing her own feelings, learned early in life as a means of coping with her pain, was reinforced.

> But I suppose one of the fortunate things for me emotionally was that the program I went into in nursing in college was very emotionally oriented. Okay, when I talk about emotionally oriented, the whole emphasis in my program completely was on what was happening to the patient. There was absolutely no dealing at all emotionally with what was happening in the nurse. Never! Even in psychiatric nursing that was never brought up. I never recognized the possible damage of that kind of approach for many, many years. Like they would make statements very explicitly that you do not talk about yourself to a patient. And it carried over. You don't talk about your own responses and your own difficulties dealing with patients, with other people. It just is not an issue. What is important is what is happening to the patient. And whether or not that was actually as extreme as I think it was, or whether I took it to be extreme because it was more comfortable with me because I was not used to or did not want to deal with my own feelings. But it certainly wasn't allowed! For example, I got away with it for four years. Nobody said to me, 'How-do you feel, that so-and-so had died? Or that so-and-so has gone bad on the ward?' Or something like that. It was always, 'How was it for them? What do you see happening in their situation?' And the whole emphasis was on intervention by the nurse to help and assist the person in whatever dilemma they were in. Towards the end of my program they introduced an emphasis on independence for the patient and a great deal of thinking about the patient's need for power and some control in their situation. But again, it all went back to what you can do to help the patient have some control. It never went into the question of what happens to you when you don't have control. It was almost like the patient was apart - somebody from a different species.

Another aspect of nursing which disturbed Elizabeth was the expectation that nurses were inferior to doctors. This meant that they could not discuss cases or treatments as equals and that they must under no circumstances question doctors, impede their efficiency or make them feel uncomfortable. She relates one example of an exchange between herself and a doctor which she experienced as humiliating. Thus Elizabeth's

experience as a nurse taught her that she could not be a whole person – she was squelched emotionally and intellectually. Eventually Elizabeth discovered areas within nursing that minimized the politics between nurses and doctors and maximized her self-esteem. In intensive care and operating room nursing she was expected to think and to communicate directly with the doctors, and in these situations she felt more valued and more equal.

> Another thing about nursing, they never, ever analyzed the kinds of things that happen between nurses and doctors. Really, some terrible things happen. I remember one of my papers was on a man who had an infarct, a myocardial infarct – that means a heart attack that causes damage, death to a part of the heart. I wanted to know from the doctor, from the cardiologist, how he knew on the ECG that this man was infarcting. This cardiologist looked at me with great disdain and said to me, 'Well, if you would like to take four years of pre-medicine, four years of medicine, three years of cardiology plus blah-blah-blah-blah, then we can start talking about this.' It was a very humiliating experience. And I think intellectually I recognized that it was false. I knew, for example, that I was as intelligent innately as that cardiologist, and that what he was talking about was not so mysterious as he was pretending. So then fortunately what has happened now is the nurses do read the electrocardiograms. They are no big mystery. But that's just one example of how nurses are put down intellectually. And as persons. So you know, it's the kind of experience where you're not treated as a whole emotional being because you don't exist as a whole emotional being, nor as a whole intellectual being. 'But we must not make the doctor feel uncomfortable.' And it's a very much put-down experience to be a nurse. I think the major thing is that you are treated like an inferior. You do not talk to a doctor about the rationale for his therapy. You do not ask him why he decided to give this particular order rather than another order. You do not say to him, 'I want to understand the physiology behind this.' You just don't do those things. And the reason you don't do them is because the doctor will be uncomfortable. That was a very, very major change for me, after my early college experience. I think that now I recognize that a great deal of that is because doctors very often don't know why they're doing what they're doing. They don't understand the physiology behind it. That's, I think, the source of their discomfort – having a young nurse who is all steeped in all the latest scientific this and that and the other thing, coming to them and saying, 'Why?' There was no way around it. I think later on I tried to get around it by going into extreme forms of nursing like intensive care and operating room nursing and stuff like that, where doctors were less isolated from nurses. You had more to do with each other, you were more equal, you had to listen to each other because it was so critical. And I think probably I did that for self-esteem. Not because of reputation so much as what was happening between doctors and nurses. I felt more valued there, for sure, and also that it was alright to think. And that you sort of got out of your role because so much of it was so critical that you had to forget all of the role behavior. For example, if somebody goes bad in the intensive care unit, you don't call the doctor up and just pass the time of day and slowly break it to him. If it's critical you tell him right away. It's very straightforward. And I think that was very important to me. I hated the politics of nursing. I just hated it! But then, on the other hand, you're up against the fact that most physicians don't understand emotionally what's going on with patients, so in a sense nurses were encouraged not to get involved in the therapeutic regime so they would have the time and energy to be emotionally involved with their patients. The problem always arose that you couldn't communicate what was happening with a patient to a doctor. There was no way to help him be aware. He just didn't know and he just couldn't understand those kinds of things. What his

> concern was, was pretty straightforward – that his treatment program not be challenged, and that his time be efficiently spent, so that he could buzz in, buzz out, everything be laid out on the chart, A,B,C and D, so that he could whip through it right away. And it became so ingrained in me not to think as a nurse, about physiology and pathophysiology, that when I started working in intensive care it took me a long time to start thinking. It actually did. I was so used to not thinking. And then I would go home and I would talk to some of my brothers, who are fairly well educated. And they would be talking about all kinds of really exciting things happening in physics and stuff like that, which really interested me. And I recognized how far removed I had become from that.

That Elizabeth felt confident of her ability to handle her responsibilities in extreme forms of nursing is verified in her answer to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerful?" She explains that she experienced a sense of power knowing that she could handle her responsibilities and feel confident in her judgments.

> I remember when I was nursing, particularly after I'd been nursing a number of years, I was aware keenly at times of my own power, as a nurse. And it was a good feeling. Like just knowing the situation was in control and having a lot of confidence in the fact that it didn't matter what happened, you could cope with it and deal with it. And also make judgments that were accurate. And of course the longer were you a nurse, the better your judgments get. And I can remember feeling at times a tremendous sense of power about that. I don't have that now because I'm not in that kind of a situation. But like running an intensive care unit, or something like that – you feel very powerful, because you feel confident in your judgments.

Most important to Elizabeth, however, was that nursing involved caring for people. She explains that her understanding of patients was limited however: although she could understand intellectually what they were experiencing, she could not appreciate what was happening to them emotionally. Her entry into the specialty areas of intensive care and operating room nursing removed the pressure of having to relate to the emotional content of patients' situations. This work was comfortable not just because it was challenging and doctor/nurse roles were minimized, but also because Elizabeth worked well in a crisis – her emotions were deadened and her was mind clear. She explains, however, that while it may have appeared that she could remain unaffected by her work, in reality she couldn't, and her pretense was actually destructive.

> But I think that the big thing about being a nurse was the aspect of caring. Like I always put a very high value on caring. The ethical aspect of it was something I felt good about. We were not told that we had to do anything that we did not agree with ethically. That made it easier for me. I think that the involvement of the family was important to me. But I think for very many years I was so blocked emotionally, that although I could understand on a sort of conceptual level many of the things that were happening with my patients, I didn't know what was happening on an emotional level. I don't know how to tell you what I mean. When I first got out of college I had a job – I was working for the U.S.Navy. And I was working on a ward and there was an older nurse that I was working with and I remember discussing with her one of the patients. And she said to me something I'll never forget. She said,

'Elizabeth, I know you understand intellectually what's going on with him, but I don't think you can really feel it.' And I knew she was telling the truth and I felt very, very much at a loss. I didn't know what I needed to do in order to understand more deeply what was happening with that particular patient. She said, 'All of your intellectual concepts are correct. He is having this reaction, he is feeling these emotions.' But in terms of understanding very deeply about the meaning for that patient she recognized that I didn't have it. I think that was very true. For very many years. And how comfortable it was for me to leave that and go into specialties like the operating room and intensive care, where it doesn't matter if you have the deep meaning to the emotional content of your patients' situations. I think that may have been quite significant. But there were probably more reasons than that for me going into intensive care nursing. I've always had this ability to work in a crisis. And I think that a lot of my self-esteem has come from my ability to work in a crisis, so I tend to seek them out. Because I do know I do better in crises than most people. I'm calmer; I'm more organized. And I think in a sense that for me when a crisis happens, all my emotions become absolutely deadened and my mind is very clear. But I think that for many, many years in my life I lived that way – with my emotions deadened and my mind very clear. So for me it was something I recognized I excelled at doing. Now as to how much this carries over into the rest of my life in terms of making crises where there aren't any so I have something to deal with, I don't know. I thought that might be possible. But going into the specialties gave me the intellectual benefits, the more straightforward relationship with the doctor, and escape from the emotional heaviness which I think affected me, although I never recognized it. Affected me in a way that probably was more destructive to me than if I would open to the pain. I don't know how to explain that. Say on a general ward where I would shut myself off from the emotional content of patients except in an intellectual sense, I think it was destructive to me. More so than if I hadn't, because it didn't work. I really wasn't – I don't know how to explain that. I couldn't really cut myself off, I just behaved as if I could. And I didn't deal with any of the things that were happening to me inside. This is particularly true in Vietnam. Because I can remember being very, very removed, probably more so than at any other time in my life, from what was happening around me.

Elizabeth's decision to go to Vietnam as an intensive care nurse was made on the basis that a need existed and she was qualified. Further, the work would be a challenge. So she volunteered. The work was hard: hours were long, conditions were poor and the nursing was intensive. Elizabeth coped as she always had – by detaching – by repressing her own feelings. She became ill, however, and this resulted in her becoming depressed. After that she needed to use amphetamines so that she could continue to work and function.

I went to Vietnam because it was a challenge. The need was there. It was meeting a need which rewarded me, because I tend to respond to needs. They were threatening in the newspapers to start drafting nurses. And people they were going to draft first were intensive care nurses. And I was an intensive care nurse so I said, 'Well, I'll volunteer so that at least you have people that *want* to go, not people that *have* to,' this kind of thing. And my condition of becoming an army nurse was that I would be in Vietnam. And they did do that for me. And the work was probably harder than anything I had ever experienced. The hours were longer. Like many times we worked 12 hours a day, six days a week, and in quonset huts that had no windows. And there were concentrated periods of time when you narrow your focus down to maybe 15 or 20 patients who are very badly wounded. And I think that I detached pretty well. One of the first things that happened to me was I

> developed encephalitis with dengue fever. And quite a few people did. And there was a long post-encephalitic depression attached with this which everybody was experiencing. And when I came down with it they warned me and they were quite right and it was early enough. And one of the things that happened to me as a result of that encephalitis was that for a long time, and I think to a certain extent even now, I don't screen very well. I did a lot more lateral kinds of thinking and my attention I don't think focuses as well. Or something. I just don't think I screen - I don't avoid awareness very much of anything. I'm not sure how to explain it. It sounds almost an extrasensory thing. I have just become more aware of wholes, whole things, the whole situation. It's very difficult. And I think that could have been a permanent thing. I don't know. Like I've been told that I have right-sided brain damage, that could be a result of that too. There's no way of knowing. But for part of the year I was taking Ritalin because I was depressed, and I was trying to work 12 hours a day. And it worked.

In Vietnam Elizabeth began to experience a growing disrespect for the medical profession. For one thing she was not impressed by their sexist and exploitive behavior toward the nurses. She describes how the doctors would decide which nurse was "theirs," and how her refusal to play this game resulted in considerable tension. In addition she came to disrespect the doctors because it seemed to her that the majority of them avoided patient contact and other professional responsibilities.

> And it was a situation where I became aware of the emotional imagery of the medical population. I mean, let me tell you some of the things that happened. These men would get together. A new group of nurses would come in and the men would decide which nurse belonged to which doctor. And this was to involve sexual contacts as well as every other contact. And then you would have it announced to you. And I remember when it was announced to me by this doctor - I remember the exact place, where I was, everything. I was so shocked! Well, he put it rather gently. He said that they had discussed it and they had decided that I was his. Well I told him that I was glad that they had made that decision but no thank-you, and things were very tense between him and me for a long time. I don't know whether this was a big blow to his ego, that he hadn't been able to gain my cooperation. Most of these doctors of course were married and with families, but it was just assumed they could no way be faithful to their wives, and I mean, 'How could anybody expect it of them?' The wives were back home taking care of the children and the home and everything like that. And it was just like they were little boy scouts running around. And I would say the majority would have as little contact with patients as possible. I was fortunate. I had a couple of doctors that were quite close to me and would help me when I got in trouble in the intensive care unit. Like if one of the patients would go bad and need something done immediately, there were a couple of doctors that would help me. Like trachs that needed to be done that nurses couldn't do and things like that - tracheotomies, which can be an emergency thing; you can't wait very long. But most of them, sometimes they would just absolutely refuse to do rounds for several days, on their patients who would be dying, needing update in their orders. And I would be in the position where I would have to go to the commanding officer and ask him to ask the doctors to make rounds, which didn't do anything for my relationship with them. And all those kinds of political things. I didn't leave there with a great esteem for the medical profession. I think it changed my view of them very much. Their thing was that they had left lucrative jobs at home and they were losing $100,000 or God knows how much money back home because they were over here for a year. And I think my position was somewhat alienated from them anyway because I refused to cooperate with their social plans.

Elizabeth explains that she was very much affected by her Vietnam experience – it weakened her emotionally because her defenses could not protect her from the horrors of war. Even today she feels she tires more easily and is unable to 'screen' – to block out information which is painful. Understanding that Vietnam veterans are just now beginning to get the support they need to readjust to life in the U.S., Elizabeth is also beginning to get a perspective on her experience.

> I think that probably my year in Vietnam weakened me emotionally, weakened my defenses. I felt more vulnerable, for example, to stress. I fatigue more easily. I don't have, like I was telling you, this ability to screen. Like when I read the newspaper it is a very painful thing, because there's no way that I cannot know what they're talking about when they're talking about wars and people with this blown off. I feel it! And those defenses are all lost. When they talk about children dying, I've seen it! And just a lot of the horrors that you see when you're in that kind of a situation. People that are imprisoned in boxes and guys coming back from the field telling you that their best friend was just skinned alive and they had to witness it. It was just horrible stuff! I don't think it ever leaves you, you know, and then it comes back when you read the newspaper and hear about stuff like that. It's funny because a lot of it has only started to make sense to me in the last couple of years. And strangely enough, a lot of Vietnam veterans are going through the same thing I hear. Well like Hollywood has started making these films on Vietnam. It's like people want to start facing it.

Elizabeth is aware that not all nurses in Vietnam had difficulty integrating their experience like she did. She explains that this may be related to the differences in the kind of nursing they did. As the head nurse of intensive care and recovery units her nursing responsibilities were very intense and she experienced extreme traumas and many deaths. Further, Elizabeth became aware of the political hypocrisy of war – that the men who make decisions which result in the death of boys may conveniently avoid facing the consequences of their decisions. Elizabeth began to question the purpose of war.

> As far as the Vietnam experience, it was more difficult for me than for a lot of nurses, because I have spoken to nurses that came back from Vietnam who seemed to integrate it very well. They had souvenirs which they would invite people over to see, and pictures, and could rattle off all these experiences that they had in Vietnam. And I couldn't do any of that. It was just too heavy for me. And some of it could be that their experience was not as bad as mine. Some of them were on malaria wards, and taking care of malaria patients isn't that traumatic. And then my position, like I was head nurse on the intensive care and recovery units so that when there was a death – and there were a lot of deaths – I felt it very keenly. Very keenly! And I think this senselessness of it. And then there were some political things that happened. Like one of the things that made me consciously aware of being angry – and that didn't happen that often in Vietnam – was when MacNamara came over and they had told us that he was going to tour the hospital. And there was to be a big evacuation out the next day. And he was coming the next day and I asked the men, one by one, 'Do you want to stay and meet him? You can go on the plane if you want, but if you want to see him, that's all right.' So they all wanted to stay and meet MacNamara. Now there is this ward full of people with half their bodies gone. I was very, very

much affected by their decision. I went to the air field when he came in, to meet him with the group of people from the hospital. There was another hospital by the air field that was just in the process of being built. We had quonset huts and this new one was actually in buildings. Quonsets are – you've seen them – they look like you take a can and split it down the middle and set it down. There's no window, it's just a curve. Anyway, so this was a real hospital, with windows no less. So they had been stocking it. They had assigned some corpsmen over there and how far it was true, I don't know. I know he never came to our hospital. It is reported that he went to the other hospital, and that in the intensive care unit the corpsmen got into bed and hooked up false IVU's to their arm and greeted him as if they were patients. Now I think that's a little extreme. I think that probably it's true that he went there and there were no patients. But whatever it was, he was avoiding the facts of life. And I was very, very angry about that for a long time. Particularly because I had to go back and explain to the men who had stalled going back to the States, that he would not be coming. But you see, it meant a lot to me, that particular act. It meant a lot to me about the nature of war. It started dawning on me that middle-aged men really don't want to know about these young boys that they're sending to be killed; that they really don't care to a certain extent. They don't want responsibility for it.

The extreme experience of working for three months in the dialysis unit in Saigon, where all but one patient died, had a tremendous impact on Elizabeth. Having to experience and accept the limitations of medicine and the failings of its practitioners also took its toll. Elizabeth believes that the experience had such a severe effect on her that she has never quite recovered.

And then I went to Saigon for three months to work in their renal unit. They had a dialysis unit – it was the only one in Vietnam. And they needed a nurse down there so I went down there. And there was a rumor that the two doctors prior to the ones that were there when I got there were suicidal because all of the patients died. And people that got into the renal dialysis unit were the ones that were so badly injured and for a long period of time, that their kidneys failed to function because there wasn't enough blood pressure to put blood through them, so the mechanism for filtration, etc. stopped. No kidney function. They would come into the dialysis unit and go into dialysis. Every one of the ones that went into dialysis died. Hemodialysis. We saved one. I remember the one that we saved because I was on duty when he started hemorrhaging one day, and he was beyond time. He was supposed to be dead according to all the charts and everything, and he started hemorrhaging. And so I went over to his bedside and his whole abdomen was full of blood. He was a very skinny man. So I went down – it was in the afternoon – and I got the doctor, the surgeon who wasn't one of the doctors. The other doctors weren't there that were running the ward, so I got the surgeon on duty and I said, 'You've got to come right away.' So he came over and he hemmed and he hawed and he farted around and I said to him, 'That man needs surgery right away! He's lost this much blood, doctor, you know.' And he blew his stack at me and he said, 'You shut up!' And I said, 'I'm not going to shut up! You take that man to surgery!' He finally took him to surgery and saved him. The man lived! I couldn't believe it! I don't know if he's still alive today; they finally air-evac'd him out. But the surgeon was in a malarial ward and he had a very advanced case. He had a very, very hard case of malaria and that was it – he wasn't able to think, you know. And so I apologized to him and he apologized to me, all that kind of stuff. And then I remember afterwards, he was sitting there on his bed, all yellow from malaria, and we'd brought the patient to him in a wheelchair. And he'd just beam. It was really nice. And then we had patients come in that were dead from overdoses of drugs – from antibiotics and stuff like that. Because you see, one of the things that they did when their wounds were so dirty was

> they'd bring them in and just flood them with antibiotics. And in some cases maybe the patients were vulnerable or extrasensitive or stuff like that. That was hard! That was hard! But the whole experience I think changed me very severely. I don't think that I've ever – I've never been what I felt to be nondepressed since Vietnam. I don't remember being depressed as such before, in what I could say was a depressed state. Like I had periods, low periods before, but I never had a period when I felt that I was in a low state. And since Vietnam I can't ever think of a period when I've felt normal, as comparing normal to what I felt before. I don't think I think as clearly. I know I'm more vulnerable to stress. I'm not sure how much feeling I'm stopping. Like I still may be doing that, but it's not so overwhelming now that I can't stop it.

A positive aspect of her Vietnam experience was that Elizabeth became engaged during that time to a physician who 'meant everything' to her. Unfortunately, however, upon their return to the States they were stationed in different cities and thus forced to separate. Elizabeth, depressed and confused by the experience, found the separation very difficult and resorted to barbituates to help her sleep. The relationship faltered.

> Oh, I became engaged during that time. I met a physician. I think that was important to me because it was a man who had spent eight years at Harvard on a small scholarship if you can imagine. He was brilliant and of course he meant everything you see, because he treated me as a person and I recognized that he was very intelligent. And I think our engagement lasted for about two and a half to three years. Unfortunately I was stationed for the rest of my service in Los Angeles and he was stationed in Denver. So it didn't work out – there were lots of problems travelling back and forth. Plus, I was fairly depressed the year after I came back from Vietnam. I was pretty heavily depressed.
> When I came back from Vietnam I was confused. I still think I'm confused when I become depressed. Like I think a lot of it had to do with separation from that man. I was closer to him than I think I've ever been to anybody, at least up to that point in my life. And the separation was very difficult for me. I can remember being very sleepless and taking Seconal. I didn't think much of it then but I sure do now. You know what Seconals are – they call them the red devils. They're a secbarbital, they're barbituates, they're very heavy barbituates. You cannot resist them. You sleep. That probably didn't help my depression any, although it helped me sleep that year.

In spite of her difficulties, Elizabeth never regretted going to Vietnam. Although it took her a long time to readjust, she appreciates how the experience changed her – how she became more clear about her values and how she became politically conscious. Undoubtedly stressful, however, was her experience that the Catholic church, which had always been her source of support, was of little help to her during her period of readjustment.

> About going to Vietnam though, it felt good that I had made that decision. I felt good about this decision. I felt good about having done what I did. I've never regretted it. I think that I changed – it changed me very, very much. And I didn't realize the change for years afterwards because I was numb for a long, long time after that. And then a lot of it started coming back. I think that my values became more sorted out. Like I would go back to the Catholic church and I would hear these priests all concerned about their parishioners' sexual lives and things, and I knew they were missing the boat. The big issues

> are all these wars that we're having, all this terrorism, all this nationalism that is resulting in such destruction of people. And they are in their churches concerned about the sex lives of their parishioners. The whole issue of sexuality ceased to be important to me. It is true to this day. I think it's a red herring. It's not important. What's important are these kinds of political things that are going on. I did then become antagonistic to the Catholic church, and I still am. I participate on a limited basis, to the extent that it sort of in a sense feels like home to me, to go to a Catholic service. But I have no part of what I feel is their stupidity anymore. I won't promote it; I won't obey it; I won't have anything to do with it. But I sure like the service. Especially if I feel something for the priest. Because I think a lot of the priests are good people.

Elizabeth worked out her time with the army in a low-key job in Los Angeles. When she got out she entered graduate school where, safe from the emotional demands of clinical nursing, she again excelled. During her second year she was able to arrange her life so as to live in a quiet, rural setting where she could spend much time alone - thinking, reading, meditating, listening to music, and trying to make sense of her life. She experienced a general feeling of calm and clear thinking, interspersed with periods of anger. Listening to the underground radio and reading underground newspapers espousing anti-Vietnam politics, in conjunction with studying Eastern religious thought, served to deepen Elizabeth's consciousness of the destructive elements of American society.

> I was in Los Angeles after Vietnam. They were very good to me. They gave me a very low-key job. In fact it was almost a non-job. And when I got out, then I went to the University of Washington and I did very well there. I was at the top of my class again. Isn't that wonderful! Yeah. Because I'm very skillful at being at the top of my class. And of course I didn't have any emotional demands doing that. It was all away from clinical nursing.
> While I was going to the University of Washington, I went through a period when I was very much into Eastern religion and meditation. I'm not sure what that was all about. In some sense people I think would probably call it crazy, because it was very detached from the culture. And I could do that because I went full time for one year, and the second year I lived away from the city of Seattle in a very, very quiet, rural sort of setting. I would work I think, six to eight days a month, mostly night duty, which was private duty. I could cope with it; it wasn't very demanding. It was satisfying because every patient you have with two other nurses and they got good care. I made enough money on six to eight days a month to survive quite well, and the rest of the time I had to myself, which was the first time in my life that was true. And what happened to me was that I started meditating. A lot of very, very deep anger about men came out, about the war, about society, about international kinds of things, multinationals, everything. And in Seattle you have underground radio and you have underground bookstores and newspapers, so I was very much into that. And like my consciousness really changed. And I thought that it was a very valid change. I felt that what I was nearer to was the truth. And then when I started reading about meditation I recognized that was what I was doing. Like I had weird experiences. I was very close to my plants, for example, on a very different basis. I don't know how to describe it to you. There was a unity with my plants that I felt very keenly, and stuff like that. And in terms of nature and certainly in terms of music. I took a lot of my classical music with me. And I began to understand the world in different terms - why I left it - and tried to re-adjust to society.

> See, when I was in that year – I don't know how to describe it to you – my mind was very, very clear. When I would read something I would wait and it would start relating to dozens of other things that were all part of it. And that's sort of the Eastern consciousness thing. You never think of an either/or, because it's all part of the same thing. It's hard to describe. But I felt very calm that year. That was the best year in my whole life. I think I was at peace. Tremendously at peace! Despite these periods of anger. And I would do things about my anger, just naturally. I would say, 'What do I need to do?' I would get little dolls and stick pins in them to release some of my anger against men and against the war and stuff like that, and it actually helped me. I felt it just coming out of me. And it changed my way of thinking too, because I started recognizing the political reasons behind war, the economic reasons behind war, all that kind of stuff. But I think the anger towards men went a lot deeper than the war. I felt the whole world had been ruined – my world that I was born into had been knocked up, made ugly, destroyed – by men pursuing their stupid little causes that have no importance in terms of universal anything. Like ego. My anger was very general. I felt anger at my father but it wasn't a really big thing. It was a thing that had happened to the world. Like I felt my father a part of that. I have never felt much for my father. I never had a great deal of respect for him. It was the whole thing. The Eastern came into it in terms of the Eastern desire to lose ego motivations. And this helped me understand the very, very small ego motivations of most men. And I just became more and more and more aware of that. And then listening to the underground radio and listening to all that anti-Vietnam stuff that was going on – listening, reading the underground stuff that I was reading, and then going back and reading the newspaper and their explanations for why what was happening was happening. It just became so clear to me how far removed our society and our culture is from the truth. It was very enlightening. I felt very enlightened.

Aware of how far removed she felt from the day-to-day concerns of most people, Elizabeth reflects that she may have been perceived as psychotic by some people during this time. Certainly her lack of concern about working full time and making a lot of money did not make sense to her co-workers. To Elizabeth, however, becoming aware of, exploring and understanding her inner life became paramount, and enabled her to begin to integrate her Vietnam experience and to put her life back together.

> Now I know a lot of people would say I was psychotic during that year. I recognize that. Like I didn't hallucinate but I started seeing things much, much differently than I had been taught in our culture. And I probably would have been called a paranoid schizophrenic at that time, by some. And I lost my concern for a lot of things. Like I didn't care what I wore. I didn't really care very much about what I ate. All my anxieties about those kinds of things left me completely. I remember I used to work on these wards at night, and I was on a ward one time and I don't know how many nurses had talked about me before, but one of them came right up to me and she said, 'Look, I hear you only work six to eight shifts a month.' And I said, 'Yeah.' She said, 'Who's supplying you?' You know? And I said something to her about, 'Well, it takes two men to support me,' or something like that. But she actually thought that. I couldn't deal with it because it was so far removed from where I was that it was ridiculous. It just didn't make any sense at all. But it was a good year. I had strange experiences. I would wake up in the morning and be very aimless and I would try to let myself come to an awareness of what my self objectives were for the day. And I would have things come to me: 'You have to go and see so-and-so. You have to go to this place.' And then I'd go there and things would happen that were really important. Like somebody would be there that I wanted to see or something like that. I felt like I was on a continuum, in touch with a wave-length that's there, that our society keeps

> us from reaching. It's kind of an awareness of some truth. I also became aware that at some level we know the future. I think we know the future, if we can get in touch with it at some level. And I think now the only relationship I have back with that year is I think about taking physics, studying black holes and stuff like that. But that was all gone after I got married.

The peace and calm that Elizabeth achieved through her meditation and time alone did not last, however. She met a man whom she married (feeling at age 30 that she *should* marry soon) and came to Canada with him. This move provided her with an escape from her confusion about continuing her nursing career. However, it also placed on her emotional demands which she was not yet ready to handle. Further, her husband's concerns, which became the center of their lives, seemed trivial and irrelevant to her own identity. As a result Elizabeth felt herself a failure and her depression grew.

> I don't know how much of myself had changed and become more attached to this other view of life, and losing that, how important that was in terms of my depression. I don't know. But I did lose it. After my marriage I could no longer read, I could no longer hear music, I could no longer meditate. I could not concentrate.
> After Vietnam I went to the University of Washington, met my husband and then I got married and the emotional demands were there. I think I was 30 at the time. I felt that I should get married, or I wouldn't. I think that I liked the man. I have difficulty believing I loved him. I have a lot of respect for him. I think in a way it meant a big change too: away from nursing, away from maybe a time when I felt I could stop. I never thought of that very concretely but that's what actually happened – I did stop. It was a change in my sort of lifestyle – my career and life, yeah. Career–wise I was very, very confused. I hadn't finished my thesis. I made vague plans to do so. We had a certain number of years in which we could complete it without being there, present. We just had to be there periodically present. I didn't want to finish it.
> We came to Canada and it was then during my marriage that I had my first real heavy, heavy periods of depression. Partly because I knew I couldn't function. The period after Vietnam to the period I was married, I wasn't able to function to a certain extent but I had lots of leeway. I couldn't organize myself from day to day. I couldn't make plans; I couldn't feel optimistic or good about anything. That really heavily started in marriage and I felt tremendously much a failure.
> Marriage seemed like it was back to the trivia, back to the importance of the academic, of achievement things, through my husband – the different kinds of kudos that have to be earned, all the anxieties connected with getting a promotion to this level, to this level. It became the center of my life again. And it was very painful. I was a failure because I couldn't identify with it. I could never really care about it. And I think my husband felt that it really didn't matter to me if he was made full professor or he was chairman of this committee or that committee. I would say it was important and I would help him, but at some level it didn't matter. It was so unimportant. And I think he probably perceived it as a lack of respect for him. Which in a sense it was, insofar as it was lack of respect for his values and goals. So then came the depressions.

Elizabeth sought help for herself from various professional therapists but found that no one would listen to her – no one would accept her diagnosis of herself that she was depressed and needed treatment. Instead they seemed more interested in either categorizing her, or imposing their experiences on her. She began to believe that she

couldn't expect these professional men to be responsible.

> And I think the fact that I was treated the way I was – everybody was trying to find an excuse not to treat me as depressed, I think, because I identified myself as such. I knew that I was depressed and I would tell these doctors, 'I am depressed.' And they would say, 'Oh. Well you are hysterical,' or 'You're trying to manipulate us,' or 'You are paranoid.' All these other things. They wouldn't deal with the depression. And of course I would always come back to that, and it seemed like the more firm I was about needing treatment for my depression, the more resistant the doctors became, one after another. I was told to read Carlo Castenados – the whole series, and to do all kinds of things, by various psychiatrists. And then I went to some encounter groups and at one of those I became sexually involved with the leader of the encounter group, who was a psychologist. It was during my marriage and I don't know what significance it had to me, but it was a case of adultery in terms of my religion, and unfaithfulness in terms of my moral system. The group started smoking marijuana and later hash, and it would be difficult for me to say who was initiating what. But it was under the influence of hash that that started. It's possible that I felt angry about that. I seem to tend to just say, 'Oh well, you can't expect a man to be responsible, especially someone in charge, head of the little family kind of thing. What do you expect? So why bother getting angry because they don't have the potential.' Or something like that. That happened.

Elizabeth spoke further about her tendency to absolve men of responsibility, believing it to be connected to her incest experience and the attitudes of professionals toward her.

> My tendency to absolve men of all responsibility is somewhat connected to my incest experience, but even moreso with the societal and psychiatric attitudes about incest victims. I think I went through 20 psychiatrists before one admitted I was not the cause of it, and this psychiatrist admitted it only after I had made it clear that I was aware, by then, that there was a school of thought which absolved the victim of guilt. But then I see women shouldering all of the social and emotional responsibility in society as a general rule. So where does my childhood experience begin and end in its effect on my life?

Unable to get the help she needed in Edmonton, Elizabeth sought help from an American specialist in depressions. He informed her that her depression had progressed to the point of altering her physiology and that she needed to take anti-depressants. Still, she was unable to convince her local psychiatrist of her needs. Finally, in desperation, she got herself admitted to the Alberta Hospital at Oliver, by acting as irrational as they required for admission.

> As for myself, I think my depression went on for all the time that I was married, increasingly as time went on. Of course this was complicated partly by the fact that I had a hysterectomy that first year, which sort of upset my hormone system and I think contributed to the depression. And it went on and on without any therapy, you see. I had some interim hospitalization in acute hospitals, which simply made me angry because of what was happening there. And there was never any therapy. So finally my husband, who was most familiar with my depressions, sent me down to the States to a specialist in depressions. He talked to me for two days and he said, 'It is very simple. You have a depression and you're too far gone to get out of it yourself because the physiology has changed too much at this point. You will have to take anti-depressants for a short time.' And I said, 'Well, my doctors in Edmonton won't do this for me.' So he said, 'Well you change them and you

find one that will do it for you.' So I did, but it seemed to be too far gone and he was dragging his feet and giving me little teeny doses. So then I called Alberta hospital and I told them that I was very acutely depressed, that I certainly needed admission because it was getting out of hand. And they told me on two successive phone calls I couldn't be admitted because I was too rational. So then I became irrational and they admitted me.
I pushed and pushed until I got myself hospitalized in the most extreme situation possible in Edmonton. Oliver. Alberta Hospital. And once I got there then I pushed and pushed to get into the most extreme wards in that extreme hospital.

Elizabeth recalls that she had also sought help for herself during her years of graduate study after Vietnam. The psychiatrist she saw, who had been recommended by the head of the medical school at her university, proved to be just as incompetent as the ones whose help she later sought in Edmonton. None of them dealt with the fact of her incest, taking the commonly assumed male perspectives that it hadn't happened at all and she was making it up (she fantasized it), or that if it did happen it was her fault (blame the victim). Similarly, no one helped her to deal with her experience in Vietnam. Gradually Elizabeth came to believe that the psychiatrists were not willing to recognize an issue which would mean hard work on their part. Rather, they seemed to her to need her to be sensitive to their needs and to share their concerns.

When I was in Seattle, come to think of it, I did see a psychiatrist, because I was going to University of Washington and we had a medical plan that included it. My relationship with that man that I was engaged to was breaking down. It was almost ended. I knew that I was depressed and I knew it wasn't getting any better so I went to a psychiatrist. He was recommended by the head of the medical school at the University of Washington. And I can't tell you what an ignorant man. For example, I was fishing around, trying to find out why I was so depressed. I knew the relationship was breaking down, I knew that the Vietnam experience was bad, I felt that possibly the fact of incest in my youth had a factor, I didn't know. This doctor's position on incest, for example, was that it was my fault if it happened, and it probably didn't happen at all, I'm just making it up. And I remember being very angry about that. That was my first encounter with a doctor telling me that about incest. I would have to say that every doctor I've seen since then has taken either one of those two positions. It was my fault, or it never happened, it was a fantasy. And I think that gradually I lost my ability to feel the amount of anger I feel about that. I just began to expect it. But they wouldn't deal with that. I now think that psychiatrists won't deal with those kinds of issues because they're very hard to deal with. They take a lot of work. I think that's part of it, because I've never seen a psychiatrist really work for his money. Most of the psychiatrists I have seen – and I have seen quite a number – if they're male they want you to take care of them. And you evolve into a relationship in which you are sensitive to their needs and you will meet their needs and listen to their little problems. I can't think of any psychiatrists whom that's not true of. There have been a couple of male psychiatrists that I felt tried to extend themselves to me, but in all cases it was expected that I would listen to their thing. So the incest thing was never dealt with by a psychiatrist. When I was at Oliver, the doctor wouldn't deal with it, wouldn't discuss it. There was an incident there in which I became aware that it was elaborately discussed in my chart, because one of the personnel started talking about it, not knowing that I could hear him, to other personnel. This was an aide informing the entire staff in one of the units about this patient

> that he had, that had this history. But it was never dealt with. And no one dealt with my feelings about Vietnam – oh, no! Heavens, no! Absolutely no one! Well in the States they couldn't deal with it because I think that there was so much hysteria over the whole Vietnam thing when I was there. I was only there two years after. They were trying to pull out, and nobody could stand back far enough, I don't think, to look at it. But then you come to Canada and they can't deal with it because they don't understand it at all. I never had a doctor even ask me, 'Was it a good experience? Was it a bad experience? What about it?' You just got, 'We won't talk about it.' And again, I think that probably they recognized that it was a very heavy issue with me and again, if they got into it it would be a lot of work. I just had this sense about psychiatrists – they don't want to do any work. I remember one time one of the psychiatrists I went to, I said to him, 'Well, I think we should discuss my father because I don't know on an emotional level whether it's important, but maybe it is.' He says, 'Okay.' Session ends. Next session we don't talk about that. In this case it was Carlos Castenados and his experiences, the psychiatrist's experiences reading Carlos Castenados. But the issue I wanted to talk about was never, never dealt with.

The effect on Elizabeth of being doubted and negated when she attempted to communicate her concerns to psychiatrists (who supposedly were the experts best equipped to help her), was devastating. She felt discredited, humiliated and degraded. She learned, too, that resisting a diagnosis or disagreeing with an accusation simply reconfirmed the psychiatrist's belief that she was not capable of speaking for herself. Understanding now the terrible effect on her of being treated as a person without validity, Elizabeth wonders to what extent her experience with psychiatrists added to her depression. In retrospect she understands that there were many stressful factors in her life which contributed to her depression, a genetic predisposition perhaps being one element amongst many other situational factors. She concludes that the combined effect of her experiences resulted in a depression that existed for at least seven years, and eventually resulted in a physiological change.

> I felt very, very discredited, you know. First of all, anything I had to say about my depression was discredited: 'You don't know what you're talking about. I know better than you. I'm the doctor. I'll tell you what's going on inside you.' That kind of thing. Doctor after doctor after doctor. It's just too humiliating and you lose confidence in your feelings about what's going on. And I can remember trying to please doctors. Like becoming hysterical: I'd go down in my textbooks – they said I'm hysterical – I'd read up on what a hysteric is supposed to do and try to be hysterical. Anything! It's very degrading! They discredit your feelings about what's happening, they discredit your feelings about what's important in your history, they discredit your experience on drugs, they discredit your honesty. I had a doctor at Oliver tell me that the reason that I wasn't practising nursing was that I was a drug addict and they had discovered me stealing drugs on the ward and I had been drummed out of nursing. He told me that in the middle of a conference in front of a whole group of people. You just get used to being humiliated and degraded in that way. There's no use saying to the doctor, 'That's not true,' because he's already said you're a liar. There's just no point in discussing it. It just is so well woven into the whole psychiatric scene that you're not a person that has any validity. I don't know how much of my depressions that I experience now comes from my psychiatric experience. I

> think a lot. And of course there is also apparently a tendency in my family towards manic-depressives, which is what I have been diagnosed as having. Manic-depressive. I don't agree at all with the kind of treatment - they say that the familial element in manic-depressive is all genetic. I think it may be partly genetic but it's also part of the system. I don't know how they can separate one out from the other. I think it's interwoven - very, very closely interwoven. Probably a system that the genetic factor is just one little teeny factor in the whole thing. Probably cause/effect relationships and everything. I am still convinced that depression does cause a physiological change. I am firmly convinced that the brain chemistry changes if the depression goes on for as long as it did with me, which was since Vietnam, so that was for seven years. I was married five years, and then two years before that that I spent after coming back from Vietnam, plus probably a whole year in Vietnam. I don't know how depressed I was there. Like I was taking Ritalin which really masked it and it's hard to tell. But it had gone on for a long time.

During her period of extreme depression Elizabeth attempted to commit suicide several times as a means of stopping her pain - a release from her depression. That suicide seemed the best way to end her suffering made sense in that she could forsee only more humiliation and degradation from the professionals to whom she had turned for help. Further, facing the hard reality that the medical and nursing professions - the professions she had once held in such high esteem - were actually behaving destructively to their patients (herself included), was a great shock. This, she states, was one of the biggest disillusionments of her life.

> I went through a long period of years when I was very suicidal and I made a few attempts. All those attempts happened during the time that I was married. I stopped that. But at the time it meant release, relief, a solution, stopping the pain, stopping the depression. It seemed to me that people will become unconscious if they have enough pain, physical pain. This has been known to happen. And I think there's a corollary in an emotional sense. If you have enough emotional pain, suffering, at some point you will decide to end it all. Especially when there doesn't seem to be anything for you except more humiliation and degradation. In my case it was a long period of time believing in medicine as an altruistic kind of profession and then to discover that it is not so, that it is very economic, and unforgiveably so in terms of taking care of the psychiatrically ill - that's a label, but people who are emotionally suffering. That to me is unforgiveable. That was one of my biggest disillusionments in life.
>
> I'm not sure what it meant to me. I think it had something to do with trying to integrate what I had learned about medicine in Vietnam, what I had learned about men during my year of meditation, and what I had come to see as the truth in what's happening in the world and my professional nursing. I spent a great deal of time at Alberta Hospital examining the nursing process. And a lot of it I tried to convince myself that what the nurses were doing was systematic and methodical in terms of caring for their patients. But I would see them doing certain things that were destructive and I would say to myself, 'I just don't understand how that fits into the therapy this patient is receiving.' And it was during the course of that year that I realized that there was no such thing. There was no therapeutic plan. There was no identification with the patient's health. There was a great desire to intensify the symptoms so that they could be fed into a diagnostic mold, sort of set, so this is what the patient becomes. And it was very enlightening. I think it took me about a year, two years, three years after that, to recognize the process of what was happening to those people. It took me back to Kafka and his things like the metamorphosis, that I had read during my year of study.

That was very much what I felt was happening there.

Elizabeth related a specific experience which explains how the procedures and attitudes toward her by professionals were actually unhelpful

> I was admitted to the hospital for suicidal depression. My psychiatrist referred me to a psychologist for testing. The method of testing was the use of pictures which the psychologist asked me to describe in terms of "what was going on" in the pictures. I knew it was a projective test although he did not tell me that. My feeling about the whole process was one of contempt for both the psychiatrist and the psychologist. I may have been depressed and suicidal but I was not stupid. At no time was I not aware of what was going on. If either person wanted me to tell them what I was feeling, etc., I would have been happy to do so. No one – doctors, staff, psychologists – no one wanted to hear. And what could they possible need with projectives? Did they think that I was not only too stupid, but also too dishonest to state my case? Were they trying to break through my dishonesty? And get to the *truth*? So there I was, intelligence and integrity being assaulted, and I was to reveal myself? Beyond that, there was another question: what would they do with any truth they got? Obviously not talk to me about it – talking to me was already eliminated by the technique. Medicate me? Diagnose me? Write me up? Manipulate me? Encourage the staff to go around with an arrogant, 'You don't know about yourself what *we* know about you, so nothing you say matters at all."?

Elizabeth's stay in hospital became to a large extent a period in which she attempted to resolve by and for herself her personal traumas – traumas which included her disillusionment with doctors in Vietnam and the failure of psychiatrists she later sought out for help. She has since come to appreciate some medical physicians' perception of psychiatrists as irresponsible.

> And of course I related it back to the surgeons in Vietnam who couldn't make their rounds and would sit moaning and groaning about losing $100,000 a year, and the fact that no psychiatrists that I met worked. It's all a very disorganized kind of attempt to do as little as possible for as much money. I think actually there's a balance sheet drawn to find out how much they can get from as little output. You know, input versus output. I think they see it as a flow. I really do! I used to think you know, since most of my experience was in Canada, that Canadian psychiatry was particularly corrupt. But then I read Women and Madness, and it really opened my eyes. And of course then I related it back to this doctor I had seen in Seattle who was so stupid, and had been recommended by the dean of the medical school. You know it's hard to believe, because I always believed that professional people seek for excellence, that that is their prime motivation. And it was very, very disillusioning to me to find out it was not, it is not. It's economic! And unfortunately it seems to me that some of the least mature physicians go into psychiatry. Like I've heard things: 'Dr.So-and-so went into psychiatry because he couldn't hack medicine.' And in the physical things they would just fall apart when anything would happen. These kinds of people I think drift into psychiatry. And I think there's some recognition of that in medicine, because medical physicians don't seem to have a great deal of respect for psychiatrists either. For example, I had a side effect to a drug that was really severe. I took it to my psychiatrist on my routine visit – he gave me the medication – and he said, 'I don't deal with those kinds of things.' And so I had to go to my family physician, my internist, to get help. And he was very, very angry. I went through what was necessary to take care of the problem, but I had to go back and talk to him because I thought maybe he was angry at me. So I went to talk to him and I told him, I said, 'I recognize you're angry.'

> And he immediately said, 'Of course. These psychiatrists want no responsibility.' I said, 'I'm so tired of that.' But you see, even then I was not facing their lack of responsibility. I was always trying to find a reason – an altruistic, scientific reason for their behavior. I remember when I was at Oliver, I went through periods when I thought I was really crazy because I couldn't understand how this was therapeutic – what was happening to the patients out there. And I would say for a good six months I believed, 'It has to be therapeutic! I mean these people are dedicated. They're professionals. Certainly they know what they're doing.' But I think that broke. I finally realized, 'It's not true. They are not professional.' A lot of it's projection too, you know. Like I made great demands on myself when I was nursing, and I assumed other people did too. Patient's needs come first – a care plan, a logical, integrated care plan, in which the whole team is involved in serving to meet the patient's needs at that moment. What a shocker to realize that doesn't happen!

Above Elizabeth mentioned that during her marriage she underwent a hysterectomy which she believes contributed to her depression. She speaks in detail about this experience in relation to the physiological aspects of being a woman. Describing the medical problems she experienced for several years, she explains that having a hysterectomy as a means of correcting her problems seemed a good idea. Besides, neither she nor her husband wanted children. However, the physiological and hormonal changes she experienced as a result of the hysterectomy seemed to make her depression more pronounced. The experience also contributed to her awareness that the medical profession can be negligent in determining reasons for surgery, and insensitive to the emotional lives of their patients.

> Part of being a woman relates to my physiology. I had a hysterectomy. The result on my emotional life was not so much from the symbolic meaning of a hysterectomy, although I'm not sure – it's something I can't relate to. But the hormonal thing, I was very, very affected by. I think for two years I was very much underweight – I couldn't put any weight on. And I think it was very much ovarian. Right now I'm doing very well – I put on a few pounds. I'm taking vitamins. But it was a hysterectomy that would be classified as not required. You know how they have lists of surgery that is not required. It would definitely be on that list. I had endometreosis – some fibroid changes in my uterus – who knows how much. The point is I never had a D and C before they did the hysterectomy. Nobody knew very much about the pathology or what it was. There was just a sort of vague wish, 'Well we hope it's bad enough so we can justify it on the records.' Let me go back. Towards my late twenties my periods became heavier. I was going around with anemia constantly, and taking iron pills. So finally one of the doctors said, 'Well, this is ridiculous! You don't need more iron. You just need to stop what you're losing.' Which made a lot of sense. They put me on the pill, and I took that I think for two or three years. I found it very depressing. Didn't like the pill! The doctor that prescribed it to me was a woman, and I used to tell her, 'You know, I think it makes me depressed, more so as time goes on.' And she said, 'Oh well, that's just your Catholic conflicts. You don't feel good about taking the pill,' and this kind of stuff. Which was not true. I know that that wasn't the case. I'm sure it was depressing me. Anyway, I got married. My husband had four children by a previous marriage, and I had no great desire for children. Went to the doctor; he suggested the possibility of a hysterectomy. I'd never thought about it because I didn't think that it would be a possibility, given that I didn't think I had enough pathology. But he said,

and I picked it up and said, 'Oh yeah! That sounds like a good idea!' So my husband came in, agreed to it, and I had a hysterectomy. So the problems related to losing a lot of iron stopped. I've never had a sincere – you know, I had these vague feelings, 'I wish I had children,' kind of thing. Just like I had these vague feelings, 'I wish I had a really good family.' For me to have children would be absolutely disastrous. I know that I can't cope. I think a lot of it goes back to my childhood. And then I suppose there is a possibility of deafness, you know. But I don't think that's a big factor. But I think the physiological changes, and I'm not sure about that, are very significant in a hysterectomy, possibly. They say the only things that you are losing are the hormones from your ovaries, and they only took part of one of my ovaries. I'm not sure he told the truth, because I felt like it was more than just part of one. In other words, I think I may only have one ovary, or part of one or something like that. But, I felt, well, depression, and it lasted until I was in Oliver. But then you see, I had been experiencing depression ever since I was out of Vietnam. But it was more pronounced. But then you see, it was right at the beginning of my marriage. So to try to sort out if it was the marriage, moving to Canada, the hysterectomy – it was probably a combination of things. But I couldn't gain weight. I was weighing in my 90's – 98 or something like that – for a long period of time. And I was five foot five, so that was really underweight for me. And I was very anxious. I don't feel angry that the doctor gave me a hysterectomy; I think he did me a favor. On the other hand, when somebody says to me, 'Oh well, you know they do hysterectomies for no reason,' I know it's true. There was certainly in his care of me, no indication of emotional complications or psychological significance or 'Are you sure?' Any of that. All those issues were not discussed at all. After I left the hospital I had to go back to his office for a sort of check. He was on vacation. His partner saw me. His partner was a young man about his age, and he said to me, 'How come you had this?' And I told him. He said, 'You are going to regret this!' That's his partner! So I thought, 'Gee, am I going to regret it?' Which I recognize as being highly unprofessional, stupid behavior. It would have been legitimate, I think, for him to ask me if I wanted to talk about any of my feelings about it, but no, he was going to tell me how I was going to feel. And this was his partner he was criticizing. I tell you, these doctors! Unbelieveable, isn't it?

Elizabeth explains further her decision not to have children. Although she thinks she would be more fulfilled in an ideal sense if she did have children, she believes that given her family situation and the fact that she had to care for eight brothers and both parents, by age 18 she had given away all the mothering energy she had to give.

I don't regret having my hysterectomy, or not having children. I regret the fact that I wasn't born into a situation with conditions where I could, you know. Like I think I would be more fulfilled as a woman if I did have children, in the sense of going back to the garden of Eden, you know, an ideal sense. An ideal sense. Like when I say that I would be more fulfilled, I don't mean /, *me*. I think it would drive me crazy . . . er. I would have liked to have been born, or, 'wouldn't it have been nice' to be born into a settled family where there was lots of love, where you were set up to be a really good mother. I think that would have been nice. But then you see, if I think like that, then I have to think about giving up all the other stuff I've ever had, which I couldn't do either. It's almost like saying, 'I wish I wasn't who I am.' Which I can't really say. But I certainly don't recommend that women rush into hysterectomies, without thinking about it and feeling about it and all that. Because I think I'm quite exceptional, in that regard. Children wouldn't do well with me, and I wouldn't do well with them. Plus the fact that I've always had this economic theory that you have so much mothering energy, and I think I dispensed all of mine by the time I was 18. For sure! And more! Like I felt that I did a very, very poor job dealing with my brothers, meeting their needs while they grew up. Yeah, I was only a child, and I recognize that I couldn't

> give what I didn't get, and all that kind of stuff. But I still felt very, very responsible for them. My youngest brother suicided. My oldest brother is on permanant disability - psychiatric disability. Two of my other brothers, three I think, are quite - I don't like to say ill, because I don't like the medical model - but suffering. They've had very, very hard times as adults. And I feel like, well, certainly their younger experience didn't help. Logically I know I'm not responsible, but I wish I could have done better, you know. And I recognize that if I had done better, maybe they wouldn't have been suffering as much as they do. But that's just kind of a fantasy. You know, you just can't wish that you were born a mature woman with a lot of emotional warmth to give people. I never made it a high priority you see, because I was always running around working, and being first in my class, and taking care of all of the little crises that came up. I think it probably is true - I never did talk to them much. Except in terms of giving directions. I remember giving a lot of directions. Stuff like that. But I don't remember sitting and listening to them very much.

That not having had a loving, warm family to care for her affects Elizabeth in her adulthood is validated in her answer to the question, "What do you regret or resent in your life?." She wonders about the sense of security that people must have who have been loved as children. It would have been nice, she concludes, to have had parents who had been able to take control of their own lives and find support for themselves outside of their family, so that they would have had something to give her.

> And I regret that I don't have a good, warm family that I can identify with. I think of people that do as very, very fortunate, and that they must feel a security and something inside that I don't know anything about. But it's a hard thing. From their point of view, they don't understand a lot of people that I understand, because of my experience. So I don't know. Like I'm not so sure that one should question one's fate - those accidents that are given to one, kind of thing. But I think that would be really neat, to have a family that I could relate to. I wish I had had parents who had gone through a lot of struggles and grown, and who could have given me advice along the way, based on their experience. I didn't. I always felt ahead of my parents. I never had the experience of having somebody there who I could go to and discuss those things. That would have been really nice. I always gave advice. All the time that I was at university I was writing my mother, advising her. It would have been nice if my mother had a group of women her age that she was involved with, who were able to give her the help she really needed - to grow, you know, that kind of thing.

Elizabeth's responses to the question, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?", reaffirm her belief that she is still suffering to some extent from the accumulated effect of her life-long traumas. She emphasizes that she continues to feel vulnerable to stress, unable to control her emotions and in need of much rest.

> My vulnerability to stress, right now. Like the episodes I'm telling you about where I felt so powerful, I know I couldn't cope with that right now. And that feels like a loss of part of myself. Because I don't know what it is, like I'm not able to push down my emotions enough to think very clearly, at times. You have to be able to do that, you know, if you're going to deal with crises. You just have to stop feeling. And I don't think I have that ability right now. I would say that's one of my greatest feelings of powerlessness. Also I have a greater need for rest, sleep. I have a greater need than most people do. That

often makes me feel powerless. I can't work five days a week and go out every evening, and do my thing. You see, I think I should be able to. Because there is so much to be done, and there's always meetings to go to, and courses and stuff like that, and I just can't do it. Like this last term where I took this accounting course, and ended up exhausted. You sort of sense your limits and I don't like them. I really don't like them, but the only way I can stay powerful is to live within them, if you know what I mean? I had a call from one of the women today that I most admire for her never-ending sources of energy. And she says to me - I didn't talk to her during Christmas - and she says, 'Oh, the reason you didn't talk to me is because I was in the hospital.' I said, 'What?' She says, 'Hepatitis. Jaundice. For two months I worked like a demon night and day to make money, and I have a good two months off now, of work. I can't work. What good was it?' And I thought, 'Well, she is a person too, then, who is going to have to learn to live within limits.' You know? And that sort of reminds me that people do have their limits. It makes me feel more a part of the human race. Because I do very poorly unless I have enough rest.

Another aspect of Elizabeth's feeling powerless today is her dependence on drugs. Although she fears being addicted, she also fears facing mental confusion, sleepless nights and a possible inability to function at her regular, nine-to-five job.

I am annoyed at needs I have. Like I need to take Elavil at times, probably a little bit all the time I should say, because it's mostly all the time that I take a little bit, and sometimes more. And I don't see the possibility of getting away from it. And then I take a very small amount of Ritalin in the morning. I think the only way I could get away from those things is to be enough in touch with myself that I was getting a great deal of peace. Sometimes I think about it and I think, 'Well, the fact that I need to take those Elavils and Ritalin is indication that I'm not living properly, that I should reorganize my life so that I don't need those kinds of things.' But then the other side of it says to me, 'Well, you do have permanent brain damage. Maybe you can't realistically get away from them no matter how you lived.' But sometimes I think maybe I should try to change my lifestyle enough so that I could try getting away from it. Like I take two point five milligrams of Ritalin a day, which is a very, very small amount. A lot of people take 30, 40 milligrams. So I'm taking two point five and I don't have any desire to increase any. So in that sense it's not addicting. But then I did have this woman psychiatrist tell me I was addicted, and that bothered me. But I thought a lot about it, and I thought, 'Well, whatever the problem is, it's probably not going to happen, because I'm taking such small amounts.' I don't know. Taking them means that I'm able to work at a full time job. I think that's the main thing. When I wasn't taking them I would go through periods when I would develop very similar kinds of symptoms to the flu all of the time. And a lot of sort of mental confusion at times because of fatigue. Like the only reason I take Elavil is to sleep better. And so if I don't, then I have a lot of sleepless periods. If I wasn't working I could live around them. Do you know what I mean? But because I am working I have to be able to be functional during the time I'm working. Sometimes I think I make too great demands on myself when I'm working. And I work on that, consciously, trying to put myself under less stress, things like that. I think basically the Ritalin counteracts some of the effects of the Elavil. The lethargy. I can remember taking, for example, 100 milligrams of Elavil at night, which is not a very large dose. I think I was on 225 milligrams of Elavil a day, for about three years. And I know people who can't function on 1000. That was after I got out of Oliver, for about two, three years after that. And I was not able to function enough to get - I know I wouldn't have been able to do the job I do now. I was working at a very menial type of clerical work, and my mind would go through things like slipping - I would call it 'mind-slip', in which I wouldn't make connections, logical kinds of connections. So that I was doing a lot of really stupid error type things. Like I was keeping charge of the time, and it would just lapse on me and I would

> make errors, very, very often. And it seems to me, since I've been taking the Ritalin, that kind of mind-slip, that lack of connection, has stopped. Most of the time I take 50 milligrams of Elavil now, which is two small yellow tablets. It would be interesting, you know, eventually I'll try an experiment of not taking the Ritalin. I go for two days a week without Ritalin, as sort of insuring that I get enough rest and that I don't get hyped up on it - that's Saturdays and Sundays. And most of the time I'm able to function fairly well. So eventually I think I'll try to get off of it. Because it could be sort of a circular thing where I take the Ritalin, therefore I need the Elavil to sleep. Because one of the side effects of Ritalin is insomnia. So logically it would be better for me to get off both of them and depend on my own cycle, kind of thing. I haven't had a regular cycle for at least 10 years, so it's been a long time.

Elizabeth also describes her experience of feeling powerless in the face of certain psychologists' theories about independence and self-centeredness. They encouraged her to refuse to support her common-law husband, Joseph, insisting that he could be responsible for himself - messages she thought she should attend to, because they were, after all, the experts.

> There's another experience of being powerless. When I went to the Aberhart Hospital, first I went there for their full-time program for four months, and then I went for two or three years to their follow-up, which was a group therapy, which happened once a week, for two hours. The main thing they attempted to impress upon me was to learn how to say, 'No!' to people, and to trust that they would have the resources to deal with what they would have to deal with. Okay. It even went so far as a demonstration by one of the psychologists there who was an expert in psychodrama, setting himself up as me, dealing with the person who was suicidal, and telling that person, 'I'm sorry, I have nothing to give you. I know you can take care of yourself.' Okay. So that was the message. I always doubted that, you see. And in Joseph's case I did doubt it. And the other message the Aberhart gives, of course, is that you are first, come hell and high water. 'You are first.' You know? Which I don't believe either. But when I left Joseph, knowing he was suicidal, knowing that his situation would get worse, I rationalized by telling myself, 'Well the Aberhart says that everybody has the resources and the Aberhart must know what they're talking about because these are experts. Right?' Because I was still in that stage where I was convinced that experts are experts.

However, acting on her gut feelings that Joseph needed help to cope, Elizabeth pushed him to seek psychiatric help. After seeing four psychiatrists, none of whom offered him help with his problems, Joseph committed suicide. Realizing that the psychiatrists were incompetent, that they had been impatient with Joseph, had concluded he was beyond help and had neglected to pass on to each other information about him that she had provided in a letter, Elizabeth felt "absolutely powerless."

> And I think in my guts I knew different. However, knowing that in my guts I knew different, I pushed Joseph to go to psychiatry. I did things to make it possible for him to get into psychiatry and what I felt would be for him to begin understanding him. I wrote to his first psychiatrist, for example, at length. He was rejected by psychiatry - by four successive psychiatrists, because 'He did not, obviously, have the resources.' His thing was psychosomatic pain - he had three major chest surgeries. All the reading I did on people who have psychosomatic problems with no organic base,

> emphasized the fact that they need somebody to deal with them over a long period of time to get through the belief. They have a fixed belief. And it takes a great deal of time to convince them that there are emotional things that are causing this. I never doubted that there were emotional things that were causing this. I mean everything was there, and I knew what I thought were the reasons. His first doctor was impatient with him, argued with him and rejected him when he would not agree with the doctor that, indeed, it was emotional and he was depressed and that's why he had chest pain. Successively, nobody took any time with him. His last doctor decided, he tells me, that he was an alcoholic and a personality disorder. When I looked up 'personality disorder' in my psychiatric reference book, it says that the personality disorder person is not really sick, they just are a worthless personality, there is nothing underneath to save. I think that that whole thing – that realizing that the resources are not in society – left me with a great feeling of powerlessness. I mean, nobody would do anything. And on top of it all, I found out that the letter that I had initially written was never transfered from psychiatrist to psychiatrist. In fact, one of the psychiatrists that I showed a copy to later, said, 'Oh, I wish I had seen that. That would have changed things.' That's powerlessness! Because my bind was, 'I cannot harass the psychiatrists; I cannot interfere. They will be – you see this delusion that there are experts who are responsible – they will call upon me if they need me.' And of course Joseph died with a letter in his pocket stating that he was fit to go back to work. Nothing was dealt with. That anger that I felt over that whole thing, and the fact that there is nothing that you can do about it – the College of Physicians and Surgeons never, ever, ever questions the actions of one of their doctors, except as a token measure – there's nothing that can be done! It related back to all the people I know that have suicided, whose doctors have screwed around with them. The cover–ups, the incompetence, the negligence, the whole thing. That, I think, enrages me more than anything I've ever met in my whole life. I would say more than negligence against me. And I feel absolutely powerless.

Elizabeth has considered fighting back, but has been warned that if she challenges the social structure she will be destroyed. She sees the psychiatric community as protecting not just their own members, but also as protecting the sacredness of the family and the sanctity of motherhood. This, she believes, is why psychiatrists are unable to help suicidal patients – they will not interfere with or speak out against the atrocities that go on within the family unit.

> I have learned from my lawyer's secretary, who is a very, very wise woman, that if I pursue it, challenge them, they will deal with me. Her word was, 'They will destroy you.' That will happen if I challenge the social structure and suggest, for example, that psychiatrists are not competent, the courts are negligent in the ways they deal with these kinds of issues. Suggest that society – you see, my basic thing about this death, Joseph's death, is that there are many, many people I know that are suicidal. They all seem to have the same problem: they cannot get away from their family. They cannot start making a life of their own, taking the energy out of the family that's being destructive to them and starting to make a life of their own. And I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that nobody points out to them – through the newspapers, their psychiatrists don't tell them – they just never learn that their families are destructive, that they have a right and an obligation to get away, to save themselves. There's this mythology of the sacredness of the family, the sanctity of motherhood. It's the Judeo–Christian thing, it's the North–American legal thing, and nobody wants to look at it. I'm not sure how much of that, the fact that it's never challenged publicly, contributes to a person like Joseph never being able to get away. But I think it does a lot. As she says to me, 'If you push it, and push it and push it, they will destroy you.'

> That's powerless! Because I don't know what to do. If I allow myself – and I know my vulnerabilities – if I allow myself to be destroyed to the extent that I cannot function, then I cannot be available to people to give witness to what I have experienced in life, kind of thing. On an individual basis. And yet if I don't pursue it, then in a public sense, it will sit where it sits. You just don't know what to do.

Giving examples from her own experience and from the experience of people she knows, Elizabeth explains in greater depth how families can be destructive. She is convinced that the psychiatric and legal professions support and protect this destruction.

> When Joseph died, the day after he died, I went to his home to see him, feeling that something was wrong. His family told me that I could not speak with him, that he was busy. And his sister was there from Stettler, and I said to her that he had asked me to do his income tax, and I wanted to come over and collect the information for it, which was an excuse. What I really wanted to know was, was he okay. She said, 'I've come from Stettler to do his income tax.' So I bought this, probably rationalizing like I say, and protecting myself from the fact that he was dead. And nobody notified me of his death. I found out through a friend. There was just nothing. After I found out I talked to the police, the RCMP who had investigated after his suicide. The officer that talked to me was very neutral, and I felt very nervous about the whole thing. And I didn't have any feelings either way about the interview except that I wanted to know what would happen with the statements that he was taking from people who knew Joseph. He told me that it would be used for social service, and to help social services, which motivated me to share with him some of my experience about the whole thing. I found out later that that was not true. That that information was never going to be available to anybody to help anybody, that it was only to be used by the coroner's office in establishing cause of death. I was very, very angry about having been lied to. And I told the coroner that on the phone one time and I said, 'It's very difficult for a person that's just lost somebody, to be lied to about the motivations of people interviewing them about what happened.' She understood that, and we talked for a bit. The police may have wanted me to feel that some good – I don't know what it was. But anyway, to find out that the circumstances surrounding his death will never be known, the truth will never be known, it is just like a cover-up. Like he's whisked away by the family, his friends are not notified, he's cremated, secret statements are taken, put on file in a secret file in the coroner's office. Nobody benefits! Nothing! And of course following that I had the feelings after awhile – I don't know where they came from – that the will was invalid. And when I started feeling that way I called the courthouse and discovered that the will had just been put in for probate. So I challenged the will. I said, 'I know it's invalid.' Eventually the will was found. I have a copy. It is an invalid will. Which concerns nobody. Joseph's life and Joseph's death have been put under the carpet. The whole significance of the whole thing – they talk about all this stuff about how suicides are increasing in Alberta. No wonder! Nobody wants to face the facts of why people suicide. Because they might shock the people who want to believe in the sanctity of motherhood, and the sacredness of the family, the all-good family. I don't know anybody that's suicided, that I know of, wasn't because of a bind of trying to get away from their family and feeling guilty. The people I know now that are suicidal, they're in the bind. The same bind. Even when I was leaving my family, after I had decided I had to do it, I didn't get any support from psychiatry; I didn't get any support from my fellow patients in the Aberhart day hospital. Their statements to me were, 'What kind of a person are you? How could a person do this to their family?' Of course I got no support from my family, to say the least. So I had to find the strength to do that myself. Which I'm lucky that I did. But most people that I know don't have that strength. Because I see them stick into their depressions, stick into whatever they have – it's been diagnosed as depression, schizophrenia, whatever. Nobody will

> say to them, 'You're right. Your family is being destructive.' Nobody will sit down and analyze with them the behaviors between them and their family members and say, 'What's happening?' Why? Why won't psychiatry do it? I say it's because they don't want to work. Like this woman I know who is schizophrenic, who's trying to get out of her family. I gave her an article from Time Magazine, on the process in schizophrenic families. And she identified it at once and she started laughing and she says, 'Not only that, let me tell you more.' And she was really excited. And I said, 'Take it to your psychiatrist.' She took it to him. He read it. He said, 'Oh well, I guess that is one school of thought on schizophrenia.' And he refused to discuss it. What he did do is he became quite suspicious of me, and warned her not to let me take over her life, you see. Why the suspicion of me? Why the rejection of talking about what she thought she needed to talk about? Can you tell me why? Here's a woman who wants to deal with reality, who's got all these feelings that somebody's out to destroy her. She says things to me like, 'My father's tone of voice, I know it's destroying my brain.' Okay, that's symbolic; I'm sure it's very meaningful and it is to a certain extent true. She says he has a different tone of voice for her than he has for anybody else in the world. A special tone of voice. Okay, he probably does. Why won't psychiatry deal with that? All they want to do for her is get her medication correct. So there's powerlessness.

Speaking specifically of her sense of powerlessness within the legal structure, Elizabeth explains that as a common-law wife she had no status upon Joseph's death. The psychological, emotional bond between Joseph and herself was considered irrelevant whereas the destructive but holy tie he had to his biological family was considered to be of paramount importance - perceived as the only legal bond.

> I was also powerless as Joseph's common-law wife. You see, I have no rights. I can say, 'Yes I was a common-law wife,' by certain definitions. For example, we were registered in the community as Mr. and Mrs., things like that. We lived together for two years. We had a marriage license. In certain people's definition we were common-law. That made no difference. You see in Alberta I have no status. I had no status. It was as if I didn't exist; that in terms of Joseph's life and death I had no importance. All that mattered in Joseph's situation after he died was who had legal right to his property. That is the only valid question that the court in Alberta will deal with. Any other question, the validity of the will - they know it's invalid, it's all laid out for them, it's invalid - doesn't matter. They are going to probate it as a valid will. It just doesn't matter. And it's not the issue of my inheriting, it is the fact that I no longer exist. And his family's rejection of me, as absolutely insignificant, is perfectly correct, legally. They are right in tune with legal reality. I do not exist in the legal sense, and they know that, and that's how they treat me, have always treated me. The bond, the psychological reality, the emotional reality, the wish of the dead person; none of that makes any difference. When I first talked to my lawyer about it he said, 'Well, if you want to make the will invalid, you will have to prove that Joseph was unable to resist the coercion of his mother.' The coercion of his mother was laid out; she admitted it. She called his lawyer, she sat him down, and she made him write the will. He said, 'You'll have to prove that he was unable to resist.' And my first reaction was, 'I can't even talk to you about this, because if he was unable to resist he would be alive today. And if you can't see that, then let's not talk about this anymore.' It was just a round-robin. I wonder if it were the other way around, you know, if it was a woman that was living common-law with a man, the woman suicided, the man was left: would he be treated as shabbily? I'm not sure. I think he would be treated better by the courts. But I don't know of course.

Taking legal action to delay the probation of Joseph's will, which Elizabeth felt to be invalid, gave her a sense of power. Asked, "In what ways have you experienced feeling powerful?" she explains that coming to a clear understanding of what had happened to Joseph in the hands of his family and the psychiatrists, learning how the legal system works, and acting on this information, made her feel powerful.

> I have felt powerful taking the postion I did about Joseph's will. And I felt powerful and I will feel powerful when I deal with the judge who made the judgment. Because the decision of the court was to not deal with the validity of the will, saying it did not matter as long as there was no money in it for me. Therefore, I could not challenge the validity of the will. They would put it through probate as a valid will, even knowing it was not valid, because the issue of the money would not change. So I thought about this for about two weeks, and it finally came to me that the courts were treating Joseph in exactly the same way his family had treated him – reducing him to his money; not considering his intentions or his wishes to be of any importance. And so then I wrote my lawyer a letter finally, and told him that I must congratulate Joseph's mother because she's right in tune with the legal morality, ethics, consciousness of the legal system in Canada. Now my lawyer's going to write back to me and tell me I'm full of it, you know. But I don't think he will miss the point. It's a woman judge, by the way. And I went down to read her decision. And it says, that since I have nothing to benefit, then why challenge the will? They'll probate an invalid will!. That's justice, you see. The feelings, the intentions, the dignity, the integrity, the person doesn't matter. All that matters is the money. But you see, facing it and dealing with it over a period of time, feeling it, meditating on it, and coming up to sort of a thing that's going on, made me feel very powerful – that I could reach that conclusion, that the courts are treating him the way his mother treated him. And that's what was really bothering me.

Elizabeth associates the experience of being powerful to her own personal congruence – a sense of her perceptions, feelings, thoughts and actions working together to the benefit of herself and others. She gives an example of when she felt powerful in this sense.

> When I think of powerful I think the word that comes to my mind is congruence. I feel powerful when I am relating to somebody and being congruent. And what I'm saying is really what I'm feeling at the time, sort of thing. For example, I was at Joan's after her marriage and spent quite a bit of the day with her, her new husband, and her two children. And at one point her son started making some statements about his tensions with her ex-husband, his father, and went on at some length. Her present new husband became more and more, I guess, agitated. I could feel it. And so finally he said 'I don't know if anything said by your ex-husband should be repeated by your son to you. I don't believe it should happen.' So it started rather a big discussion. I was sitting next to Joan and I said, 'Joan' – she was handling it as an intellectual proposition, that she felt that her son had to speak truely. And I said very softly to her, 'Joan, I don't think that's the issue here.' And she turned to me, very quickly, and she said, 'Be quiet, everybody! I want to hear what the issue is.' And I said, 'Well I don't know. I'll just tell you what I feel. I think that Michael (her new husband) is sensing the possibility that his daughters will go back to their mother and repeat things he has said, and is identifying with your ex-husband in that way.' So she confronted him with this and he said, 'Yes, there was that.' It wasn't being right, so much as speaking what I sensed was happening, you see. And I felt

> very powerful at that moment, because it cut through the sort of argument about does he have the right to speak, and centered it on his discomfort about the possibility that his daughters would go back to their mother and start. And also because some of the things that her ex-husband had done were funny, and I mean riduculous funny, and so we sat there are sort of giggled about them - partly to relieve the son's anxiety about them. Do you know what I mean? For example, he had shot himself in the foot, and went on and on about this and his father's reactions. And we went, 'Ho,ho,ho! Isn't that tremendous! You shot yourself in the foot! Isn't that unbelievable?' and sort of poo-pooing the fact that his father took it so seriously. And other things like that. Her new husband felt like we were making fun of her ex-husband, which I don't think was the thing that was happening. I don't know. And I said at the time, 'Like I don't know how, when I'm close to a person, it's very difficult for me to be confidential about what's going on with me.' And I still feel that what he was demanding of the children was too heavy for them to carry. Because he was asking the children to be responsible for the parents' feelings. Do you know what I mean?

Another aspect of feeling powerful for Elizabeth is her ability to tolerate other people's anger - something she learned in nurse's training. She recalls her confusion upon realizing that the psychiatric personnel at the Alberta Hospital could not withstand the patients' anger the way she could.

> Another thing that makes me feel powerful, and I think it is a power of mine, is people can get very angry at me, and scream and carry on, and it doesn't bother me. I think that comes from nursing, because you learn not to take anything personally. That was one of the basic things they taught us in nursing: 'Your patient will get angry at you, when they're frustrated, particularly if they think you care, and don't take it personally.' In fact, they would say, 'Put a heavy bonus on it, because you're probably helping them a great deal by standing there and letting them be angry.' And so I do this, you know. And this was one of the things that really puzzled me when I went to Alberta Hospital. So few of these psychiatric people have the ability to withstand a patient's anger. They certainly have no ability to value it; they punish it! And I used to sit there and I'd think, 'Jesus, you are psychiatric personnel; I'm only a medical-surgical nurse, and I've learned to deal with it and value it. Why can't you?' They take it personally. Can you believe it? That's, I think, one of the really strong things I have. And it worked a lot of times because it increases the amount of trust people have in me, if I won't get all upset and punishing, and rejecting, after they've been angry. Like this girl who's schizophrenic, you know, she called me up one night and started laying on me all the difficulties she's having, and screaming and yelling and all this kind of stuff, how it was so hard. And so I sat there listening to it and said, 'Yes.' And then she got very penitential, you know, fearing I would take it personally and this kind of thing. And I told her, 'No, do your thing.' And as a matter of fact I told her, 'You sound healthier to me than I've ever heard you. It's great.' She was really getting angry about the fact that she had to grow up, you see, that's essentially the thing. 'Well sure, why not? It's somthing to get angry about.' So that I recognize as a strength. I never did you know, before I recognized how few psychiatric people could handle anger. It is a real problem! And I used to think while I was at Oliver, you know, these patients that go around breaking windows and stuff like that - it's because nobody will listen to their anger. And then of course they get punished, you see. Awful! Awful! And I feel that I don't do that. I don't do that to people. In fact I have to admit that I really feel pretty good when somebody blows up at me. I feel really warm like, 'Good, it's helping them,' kind of thing. And I feel powerful, partly because I recognize how few people can do that.

Elizabeth also confirms that she feels powerful knowing that she can support people

who are going through a crisis. Being overinvolved with too many people, however, can result in her feeling out of touch with herself, weakened, resentful and without power. She is learning to say 'No' to people, however, to ensure that she doesn't become overinvolved to her own detriment. Saying 'No' also makes her feel powerful.

> I feel powerful supporting people through crises I think. Like this girl that's supposedly schizophrenic, trying to leave her family, and going through the exercise with her of giving her support, and at the same time very straight-forwardly refusing to replace her family and her mother. It's touchy, you know. When I am overinvolved in a lot of activity with other people, I lose my sense of power. I feel out of touch with myself. And then I feel weak, weakened. And it results in resentment, I know.
>
> I feel powerful I think, when I say 'No.' Which I don't do a lot. Like when I pull my phone out of the wall. That's sort of powerful to me. I would like to say that I feel powerful confronting, but I don't confront that much. When I do I feel powerful, but I don't confront an awful lot. I think a lot of the time I feel like, 'Why bother?' Or, 'This person has the right to be this lie that they've fallen into. Why bother challenging it?' And part of that goes back to the fact that I remember a statement by a woman who taught me a course in human relations. She said, 'If you don't want to be involved with a person, don't confront them.' And I always think about that. It's like Joan's situation. I'm involved with Joan, I choose to stay involved, so the confrontation.

The importance to Elizabeth of being able to help others is validated in her answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?" That people come to Elizabeth in crisis means to her that they trust her. Elizabeth elaborates on the loss of power she sometimes experiences when she is overwhelmed by another's pain. This means to her that confidentiality has now become an issue for her to resolve.

> I guess I value the fact that I can give something of significance to somebody if I choose to do so. I value the fact that when people are very deeply in trouble they will come to me. It just seems that the worse trouble they're in, the more they'll come to me, that kind of thing. And that to me is meaningful. It means that they value me as a person they can turn to when they're in pain or in conflict, or suffering. But at the same time, as I say, I'm wrestling with the confidence thing because a lot of times I feel overwhelmed by the kinds of things that I hear people telling me. I remember one time I was in my office, and two things had happened that I had been told about. One of them was about a woman who is getting a divorce after finding her husband in bed with her husband's sister. And apparently she had told two or three people in the office about it, went on vacation, came back, and the whole office knew. Well I didn't know, but she said the whole office knew. And that must have been tremendously painful for her. And we talked a lot about, you know, how can you trust people, or how are you handling this kind of thing. And I recognized that there was no way that I could repeat that to anyone. And it was very difficult. That, and there was another thing that came up. And I remember just going over to one of the women in the office and she said to me, 'How are you?' And I just burst out in tears because I just felt so overwhelmed. And yet you see, I wouldn't want these people not to come to me. Because I want them to feel that they can trust me. But it's really hard at times. Because you feel so keenly what they've been going through, particularly this one that her husband was with his sister. And most people, in our office anyway, would handle that by making light of it, and making it a, 'Oh well, ha ha ha,' story, 'Have you heard the latest?' kind of thing, rather than

> feeling the pain that that woman must be going through. I suppose that's their way of coping. I was also glad that nobody had come and told me about it, because when she came to me and she told me about it I could honestly tell her I did not know. So that I value – people in crisis can come to me. It means that they can trust me.

That the issue of where to draw the line between helping others and hurting herself is important to Elizabeth, is validated by her answers to other questions. Asked, "What do you regret or resent in your life?", she explains that she regrets that she has sometimes rejected and hurt people. As she continues it becomes evident that this happens when she can't cope with others' needs because of her own pain and frustrations.

> I think there are several things that I have done that I regret. There are a couple of people that I have rejected that I feel very badly about. And every so often I go through this experience where I will sort of summarize my feelings in life and feel very greatful that there is such a thing as forgiveness, you know, for having failed, and been stupid and ignorant and hurting people. Like it's almost like I would only realize over the years how much I really must have hurt some of the people that I did hurt. I always feel, when I go through these experiences of reviewing all the things that I regret having done, I always think I must use my time to make up for that, and those kinds of tendencies in my character, to work on changing. And sort of thank God, I have some time to do it, kind of thing. But I think some of the things that I have done in terms of hurting people were ignorant, and I think it had a lot to do with my own pain, my own emotional frustration, kind of thing. That I just didn't have it together. Mostly these kinds of things are people that come to me in need and I just can't cope. I can't really think of anything except those things to do with people that I may have hurt.

The issue of not wanting to appear hurtful to others comes up again in Elizabeth's answer to the question, "What do you dislike in yourself?" She first explains that she dislikes her tendency to violate confidences.

> Well it goes back partly I think to the thing – right now at this point in time, I dislike most of all is my tendency at times to violate confidences. I think that I have to be very careful, and I have to find a way to deal with that, that I haven't found yet. I have to work on that. And I don't think it's something where it actually ends up hurting people. I just feel very guilty about the possibility, you know, that somebody that I'm talking to may not respect the person that I've told something about and may repeat it to another person, carelessly, kind of thing. And that it may get back and somehow hurt the person. That is probably the thing that I do that I regret most and don't like most.

At the same time as she dislikes herself for tending to violate confidences, Elizabeth values her sincerity in trying to resolve this issue for herself. Asked, "What do you value in yourself?", she explains how important it is to her that she arrive at an answer to the question of confidentiality, no matter the effort required, and that she values her sincerity in such matters.

> I guess sincerity, more than anything. I guess the thing that I have of not accepting easy answers – that I will try to get the real answer, even if it's very uncomfortable and takes a lot of strenuous effort and sometimes suffering to get what I want – that has some truth to it. I think I do rationalize about some things, but when I recognize doing it I try to get away from it and face whatever it is that I'm trying to run away from. One of the things that I'm dealing with right now, for example, is trying to formulate some very concrete idea for myself of what constitutes keeping a confidence. Where do you draw the line? At what point or how do you go sharing somebody else's experience with another person? That's hard for me. I feel like doing it as a matter of giving to somebody, yet I don't want to violate the person that told me something in confidence. That's a hard thing for me to do. Particularly because a lot of these things that are told to me in confidence are pretty emotionally laden. So you have it inside, and you're feeling this, 'I want to talk to another person about this,' sort of thing. And I think at times I'm not careful enough to protect the person. Because I don't have a stong, clear decision about where the barriers are, where the line is drawn. But I value my sincerety in trying to work out a confidence issue, because I think that a lot of people don't go through that kind of stuff. And I think you pay for it in the end, if you don't.

Elizabeth also sees in herself and dislikes a tendency to reject others. As she responds to the question, "What do you dislike in yourself?", she seems to be in conflict about her need to publicly act on her own principles versus her need to not hurt others.

> What else do I not like about myself? I sometimes wonder if I don't reject people. If somebody does something that I feel is a violation of somebody else's humanity – I'm thinking at this moment of one of our assistant managers, and he does things which I feel are a violation of people. And so I have nothing to do with that man. I will express my dislike for him publicly. Everybody knows. Everybody knows why I don't like him. I will refuse to be involved in any social event that he's involved with. He's leaving the office; I refused to sign his card. I will not make a donation to his gift, nor will I go to his farewell luncheon. Now I sometimes wonder if that's going overboard. I don't know. And it could be. It could be a little bit reactive and punitive and so forth and so on. I guess mostly I regret not staying away from him, but speaking against him. I don't know. I'll have to think about it. I'm working on it. I don't have all the answers, Cheryl.

Asked, "In what ways do you experience yourself as powerful?" Elizabeth explains that in the situation she described above, where she refused to be involved at work with a man whom she dislikes, she experiences a sense of power. She describes another situation at work in which she felt powerful – a situation in which she took a stand, based on her principles, and effected change. She feels good, too, knowing that others respect her for speaking out and acting on her principles.

> Well, that experience I just told you about was pretty powerful. I have the right to do that, to take that position. And I know it affects a lot people. That's part of the reason, as I say, I'm doubtful whether I should make statements in public. But for some reason, when I do something like that it affects a lot of people. For example, last year one time I was writing the newsletter for the office. I asked the Recreation Club, we call it the Rec Club, for $1.75 a month so that I could have a second page to my newsletter – management would only give me one page. They had a meeting of the seniors, and decided, 'No.' My reaction was immediately to go and make a formal withdrawl from the Rec Club myself, you see. And I didn't do anything

> about publicizing the fact until they said, 'Elizabeth, we want you to run for this office or that office.' I said, 'I can't. I'm not a member of the Rec Club.' And everybody's mouths dropped and they said, 'Why aren't you?' And I said, 'Well, there was a little incident in which I didn't get support for my newsletter so I withdrew in protest.' Well it flew through the office; everybody now knows that, you see. It was just a little gesture, but I'm sure that I will be getting $1.75 in the future from the Rec Club for my newsletter. And that's nice! Other times too. Like one of the senior women was having a drink with us after work on Friday. A group of us were there, and she started something with the people at the table, 'I don't know where you people are.' And she looks at me and she says, 'No Elizabeth, I know where you are.' And I thought about that and that made me really feel good, you know, that she could say that. She was quite a perceptive woman. She was saying to the group, 'I don't know where you are,' and then she said to me, 'I know where you are, Elizabeth.' And I felt very strong about that, and good. Because I know she disagrees with my position, but she respected the fact that I stated it and that I made it known. And it sort of meant to me that probably other people do as well. And I think there are actually very few people that reject me, although I know very many who don't agree with me. And I feel very good about that, you know. But I think it's mutual. I don't agree with them, they know, but I don't reject them. Except for this one assistant manager, who I actually don't reject in the sense that if he initiates a communication I certainly will deal with it., I just don't go out of my way to be with him, because I don't wish to be.

The conflict that Elizabeth experiences in relation to being available to others versus taking care of her own needs comes up again in her response to the question, "What do you value in your life?" She questions her past tendency to give of herself according to the needs of others and describes her frustration in not receiving the same kind of understanding from most other people.

> I value people, I think, and yet sometimes I wonder about that because most of the time I think I spend with people is at their request – they've taken the initiative. And I don't often do that myself. So I'm not sure that I'm really valuing people when I don't do this myself. I don't know. And for a long time I've had a tendency to give my time according to what I felt was the need of the person to have my time. On the other hand, I think that if I do come against a person that I feel can hear me very well, then I take advantage of whatever time they will give me. But there aren't very many people that I know that hear very well. At least the kinds of things that I want to talk about. Like if I come up against a person and I start talking to them about something and they do things that I don't like, like classifying, categorizing, diagnosing; I know that I will just stop talking to them about what is important. And an awful lot of people do those kinds of things. I think that I give them a couple chances and after awhile I just won't bother. So I'm not sure how much I value people. As a matter of fact, my doctor once said to me after somebody had suicided, he said, 'How do you get so close to these suicidal people?' And I said, 'Well I value them. And I think they know that.' And yet, do I really value them? Or am I just giving them a priority on my time because their need is so great? I don't know. It's hard to know. Because I recognize that I'm different from most people. I don't like, for example, the whole middle class way of life. It to me is a waste of time, and that goes back to wasting time. I don't care what anybody has, I don't care what they've just bought, I don't care where they've been, kind of things, in their terms of impressing somebody. I'm not impressed. If they've had a really, really good experience, I'd sure like to hear about it, but I don't want to participate in being impressed by anything in terms of status or, yeah, mainly status. I just think it's a horrible waste of time. And most peole are like that. Unfortunately. Sometimes I've thought, 'Well people that go to univeristy

> might be different, because they're putting more emphasis on intellectual things.' And yet I don't find in a university group, that often times there's a lot of emotional maturity. I sense a lot of immaturity. That extends to a certain degree to physicians. Like I see most physicians as very emotionally immature. And somehow maybe it relates back to the fact that they spent so much time in school, spent so much time on studies. I don't know. So I can't go to a university group and say, 'Well, here are people with similar values to mine.' I don't know. Then the whole political thing, like I can pull away from the middle class and say, 'Oh, I don't like your system,' and it adds up to, 'I don't like your capitalistic system.' Then I can go to a Marxist group and wonder if I'm going to fit in there. And I don't feel like I fit in there either because they're all out to influence other people and to propagandize – change other people. And I'm not into that either. I don't think that's my right. So, I don't know. On the other hand, there are some people that I can relate to that have some sort of feeling for what I'm talking about. And I think they value their time with me too.

As Elizabeth continues to talk about her experiences with people it becomes clear to her that it is not people, as such, that she values. Rather, it is the meaningful exchange – a quality of relating that involves an honest search for a deeper understanding and results in a moment of truth. This truth, Elizabeth explains, is a reason for living.

> What I actually value about being with people is, I think, meaning. Somebody can tell me about their experience. What I really want to know is the meaning it has for them, the importance it has for them, what they've learned, why they feel that it has that significance to them, what it's going to mean in terms of their life. Almost a groping, searching kind of communication, where you can't really say, 'This is it!' Because once you say, 'This is it,' you sort of close everything off. It's almost like a 'maybe', a 'possibly' kind of communication. And that means truth! It's like a moment of truth, when nobody's trying to scam anybody or convince anybody or impress anybody. And it's a moment when you feel that you're helping the person who is telling you about their experience find the meaning, just by telling you about it. And also you're learning, just by listening to them. And it's a thing where you go back and forth, 'Is this possible?' or 'Could this be the thing that really got to you?' or something like that. It's an inner growth kind of thing. And it's very honest. I think that's the thing that gets to me is honesty, because nobody's saying, 'This for sure is it.' Maybe it is. There's lots more than what is being said. There's lots more and everybody recognizes it. It goes somewhere. And experiencing truth, that means a reason for living, I think.

Elizabeth's discovery of what in life is meaningful provides her with a reason for living. The importance of this discovery cannot be underestimated, considering that she did attempt suicide on several occasions.

> Like I went through a long period where I was very suicidal. I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that I was trying to adjust to a middle class way of life, and I realized it was pointless for me. Because it was meaningless. It just didn't contain anything worthwhile living for. All this competition and conflict, alienation from other people in terms of comparing and – I don't know exactly how to say it. I have a really strong gut feeling for it. It's just gets to me very strongly. And I think once I decided that I was not going to suicide, then I had sort of the rest of my life to myself, and I could use it to do what I felt was meaningful.

That Elizabeth became stronger, having faced possible death, is evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?." She states that she values her

persistence.

> I guess I value my persistence. I'm not very proud of myself for having been suicidal you know, because I realize that was a lack of persistence on my part. My having come to the point of wanting to cash it in a few times. But I think other than that I've been pretty persistent most of my life. And not given up and just hung in there, kind of thing.

Elizabeth explains that on a spiritual level she believes there is a life after death. This belief comes in part from her religious involvements and in part from her nursing experience with people who are dying. Having reflected on death, and life after death, and having herself considered suicide, Elizabeth perceives that certain people seem to have an understanding of life that others don't have. It bothers her that her family does not have this understanding.

> And I don't know where it goes. Like I have to admit, in a spiritual sense, I don't think life ends at death. I think there is a birth into another – I don't know what the other existence could probably be, but even if we retain an identity that's similar. But I think that the universe is such that energy is not wasted; that it does go somewhere. The fact is that if you're living an honest life, it's often very painful. It's certainly a struggle. And I can't believe that that kind of learning and energy is ever wasted. I know a lot of people say, 'Well the only value it has is what effect it has on further generations.' I don't know, maybe so, maybe so. But whatever it is, I think it has to go forward. And I know that's partly religious. I don't have any firm notion about continuing a human identity – life after death kind of thing. But I think the energy goes somewhere. And I think a lot of that goes back to my nursing. Like things happen in nursing that if you pay a good deal of attention to it – like people know when they're going to die. I remember many occasions when I would be with a patient who was dying, and I can't verify that this really happens because it could be a figment of my imagination, but I noticed early on that they would *half*, and that's the only way that I can describe it, is they would *half*. I would be with someone who everybody felt was dying, taking care of them, and of course you kept measuring their vital signs. And all of a sudden, when they were dying they would start halfing – their pulse would cut in half, their respiration would cut in half, their bood pressure would cut in half. And then it would level off for awhile, and then it would cut in half again, and cut in half again. And I don't know, but that struck me. It was almost to me like a wrenching – a wrenching of something, that was happening to them. I've talked to other nurses about it, and they haven't had that precise experience, but they've had other experiences, like tunnel experiences. I think that most nurses have talked to patients who have tunnel experiences – died, or supposedly died to the point of having to be resuscitated, and coming back and describing being in a tunnel with a light, and aware of what was happening to them in the room where they were. I don't know what any of that means, but it's very powerful. And then of course you think, 'Oh well, there's the possibility that this person that has died continues in some sense to exist, and you realize that what they take with them has nothing to do with material world. They have lost their status, they have lost their material possesions, and all they've got left is perhaps what they learned. I know a lot of people don't believe in that. And my sense is that for some of the people that don't believe in life after death, it is a hope, because of the way they're living. They have decided at some point to base their life on the proposition that this is it, you know, and take it for all it's worth. It's funny you know, because I think that the people that I consider to be very wise, a lot of them are not highly educated. They have a great deal of what I think is very profound understanding of the human condition. But

> they've never read any of the great philosophers, psychologists, or anything like that. But they seem to know something that's very valuable. Unfortunately, I can't find anybody in my own family like that, and I think that's always bothered me. But then again, my family's fairly materialistic and measures people's value in terms of their educational status and their material posessions. So part of my aversion to that could be to my family. Because I realize that there's no warmth there, there's no concern, there's nothing, for me anyway. I don't know. Like I was thinking the other day that I have to get a new apartment soon. And I live in an apartment house that's very poor, and we have very, very poor people that live there. And I feel quite comfortable with them. I can talk to them and feel like I'm not wasting my time, because they can tell me about things that are pretty valid. If I go into a middle class situation, like an apartment house that's full of middle class people, I know it will be very difficult for me. On the other hand I've lived in situations with very wealthy people, and if they're not striving they seem to calm down enough to talk about important things. It's sort of the middle class situation that bothers me. It seems to put person against person somehow, and there's no community.

The personal conflict and struggle Elizabeth experiences around meeting her own needs versus meeting others' needs she also experiences on a political level. She is excited by her involvement in feminist organizations and finds peace reading feminist literature because it makes sense and seems true to her. However, she is in conflict about where to put her energy and how best to help other women who perhaps do not see a need for change.

> As for being a woman now, today, I feel very excited about meeting people through feminist organizations like the Rape Crisis Center, and other groups of women that 'see the light.' And I find a great deal of peace in reading what feminists write, because it makes sense, really. It seems true. I have a lot of conflicts right now. Where do you put your energy? I'm not so sure. I don't know whether or not women as a group want the way it *is* to continue – whether for most women there is enough reward in the relationship between men and women right now. Like I don't think women are the all-exploited and the men are the exploiters. I think it's a two-way thing. It's true that I don't know, I don't think I know any man that really wants to stop it, really. I mean *really* want to stop it. I know some women who do, but most women I know don't seem to want to do anything about it. I don't want to get into the situation where I'm going to end up taking care of a lot of women who really don't want to help themselves, because I don't think that's the answer. I don't think that will work for one thing, and I don't have the energy. Where do you draw the line? I have to go on from here and evolve in myself, as much as I can. And at the same time be involved with other women who also want to evolve. But if the majority of women want the status quo, I'm not so sure that I should dictate to the majority. Where do you stop minding your own business? And where do you start helping other women? I'm really struggling with that right now. I don't know what to do about it.

As she points out, Elizabeth is experiencing this conflict both philosophically and politically – in thought and in action. She wonders about her own motivations, comparing herself to the silent majority, and she questions why she should be any different.

> The other thing that I'm struggling with a lot right now is a philosophical thing. If as many people as I see are motivated by other things than what they say they're motivated by, in terms of economic motivation or power or ego – all of that, what makes me different? Am I lying to myself that I'm different? Like I've been reading Schopenhauer, and he makes a pretty strong case for the fact that we rationalize our instincts – whatever rationalization is necessary to support our instinctual inclination, we will go along with. And it makes a lot of sense for me, from what I see happening to a lot of people. They will say, 'I'm doing such and such,' and they're not. When it comes down to the wire, it's not true. So what makes me different, you know? I don't know. Maybe I'm on the same survival basis as everybody else, dog-eat-dog, in my own way. Lying about my real motivation. For some other reason: power, influence, I don't know. What I think I need to do, you see, is think about this kind of stuff until I'm finished, and then start talking to other women that I feel close to, about these issues – the ones that I'm dealing with – and find out what they do with them. Because I think a lot of women, particularly feminists who have been in it awhile, have gone through all this. I felt really good in the end of the 60's when I would join the peace marches, for example, and try as a minority to switch. But then it wasn't being a minority, it was the majority of the people that wanted to get out of Vietnam. It was the majority that would protest. It was still the minority that was promoting the war, so it was not exactly the same thing. I don't feel inclined to try to change women right now. I think that I'm just not sure enough about who I am.

For Elizabeth, being a woman today is a complex and exciting thing. It involves a changing consciousness of attitudes towards women and men – a growing appreciation for women and a re-evaluation of men's ideas, which she used to consider superior. It seems to her that she has reached a point of no return for herself – that no matter what happens in society, her perspective has changed. This means, however, that she feels more alientated from mainstream society and that she needs to protect herself from the sexist elements she perceives.

> I think being a woman in this time in history is very exciting. It astonishes me to read the paper every day and see so many articles about women, by women. I used to read, you know, I used to read men all the time and think that they had a corner on reality, intelligence, experience, everything. I never bother reading them anymore. I was thinking of reading D.H.Lawrence, you know, and I listened to a radio program about him and I thought, 'He really didn't have it together.' You know. Poor man! He tried. He did try, I think. But I don't think he got it together. The thing that frightens me I think, is the possibility that things will go backwards. I've almost come to the point where I've decided that if they do go back, or if most people want to go backwards, I won't resist it for them. But for my own personal life I would. And I'd probably experience greater alienation from society than I do now. Like I already feel a great deal, but I think it would be even more. And that would mean more of the things that are already present, that are unpleasant. That's something that I really have to think about, because I seem to do a fairly good job of shutting myself off from a lot of the sexist things that are happening in society. It bothers me, you know, and I'm aware that it bothers me, but it doesn't seem to linger on and on and on.

It occurs to Elizabeth again that she also needs to protect herself from her habit, learned in childhood and reinforced in nursing, to take care of others. Again we see that she struggles with this issue both in terms of her personal and political life. She asks herself

a two-pronged question: when is taking care of others not helpful to them, and when is it detrimental to herself?

> And also I don't want to get into the bind where I'm taking care of a lot of people. You see, one of the things that I've really sorted out for myself was that the people that I was taking care of, I really wasn't helping. It took me a long time to understand that. A long time! Because you see, I had to reverse my energy and start taking care of myself. And in many ways it's a lot harder. You get more public self-esteem, perhaps, for taking care of other people. You know. 'Look how good you are, helping so-and-so,' kind of thing - like you have it more together than they have. A power trip, you know. And so if you stop doing that and start taking care of yourself, especially somebody weak like me that's not done a really good job of it, then you're back doing pretty primitive things. Basics! So I will get it sorted out. I don't know right now. I went to the El Salvador benefit. These people are very determined about trying to help their families in El Salvador. I left with a question in my mind: 'Would they lift a finger for anybody else?' I don't know where that question comes from, but I don't think so, I'm not sure. Like I'm not sure that they would protest injustice right here in Edmonton. So you have some people going down there who are not Latin American, helping with their cause. Is that an evasion? Of what they should be doing here, right now, in their lives, in Edmonton? Do you know what I mean? I almost feel that those people in El Salvador have to get it together and rebel, and protest. And yes, they say they can't. And then you come into the point of taking care of them again. And I'm not sure. I don't know. Do you see the bind? Like so much of my life I've spent taking care of other people and getting a lot of reward from it in terms of feeling justified and like a good person, and all those kinds of things. And I've withdrawn to a certain extent, because I don't believe in taking care of people. Now I'm struggling with the whole thing of joining a cause to influence other people. I don't know. And one of the things of course that has happened to me is that I've become overtired. And at a point I had to stop, because I had to stop. Almost as not a voluntary choice. You know what I mean? I'd like to be able to do it as a voluntary choice, and feel good about taking care of myself too. Like I don't want to ignore other people's needs, but I don't want to ignore my own either. And it's very difficult for me to find that balance. Very hard! I wonder how many other women are struggling with the same thing?

Elizabeth has taken concrete steps toward reducing the demands on herself to take care of others. She left nursing and now does secretarial work. Having a routine job with free evenings and weekends means she has more time and energy for her personal life. She believes that, although she is still committed to the ideal of nursing, the reality of working in a hospital and having to cope with the inadequacies of the medical profession would be too stressful. She couldn't keep quiet about what she saw, she states, and this would be unacceptable to her since she has discovered that keeping quiet makes her depressed.

> I do secretarial work now. Sometimes I think about nursing, because I really enjoy nursing. But I think about the ideal type of nursing that I fantasized was going on. I was able to do it with a lot of blinders on. I couldn't do it anymore. Plus the fact that I can't cope with the stress, and that would be additional stress. And what I'm doing now is very, very easy. It is very easy! I work five days a week, the routine nine to five - it's not exactly those hours, but you know what I mean - every evening free, every weekend free.

> For a nurse that is just tremendous! I value that very much because of my nursing. I value the experience that I have more energy for my personal life. I value not being so caught up in my work that I don't have time to talk to the people at work. Like I spend a lot of time talking to the people at work. You know, I used to think that I would feel guilty because I'm not using my profession and nobody's benefiting from my years of education. But I really don't feel that way. I think that I put in enough years for my education. I really do! And in a certain sense, I don't think I could cope, period, in terms of the stress and the hours, integrating my experiences, avoiding what I'm seeing, that kind of thing. I think that I'd just become so angry now about a lot of things I'd see happening in medicine, not just in psychiatry, that it would be very difficult. And I don't think that I could keep my mouth shut anymore. Because I've learned that keeping my mouth shut makes me depressed. So I don't think that I would be too good at nursing. Because I was fairly vocal sometimes before, but only in emergencies. Now I don't think I would be quiet anytime. That Women and Health Conference made a difference to me. Remember the nurse that spoke? She has her PhD., supposedly on top of the new way of nursing, you know. And it is so behind! So tied to the medical model! I couldn't conform to it. And I don't want to either. So I think my job right now is really good for me. I sometimes think, 'Oh wow, I have to do really stupid things for a long period of time, calculating a lot of meaningless figures and typing manuscripts that are relatively meaningless, just to earn enough to pay my rent.' But then I look at it and I think, 'Well, most people are doing that.' It's not all that exciting often, but we have a lot of, I think, closeness where I work. I would find it difficult if I didn't have that. That means a lot to me.

How much it means to Elizabeth to have time to herself, free from demands to attend to the needs of others, is evidenced in her answer to the question, "What do you value in your life?" She explains that she values having the time to 'be with' herself – to think, read, and integrate her feelings and experiences. She explains, too, that she feels good about the conclusions she draws and the process she goes through to reach them.

> The first thing that comes to my mind in relation to value is time to myself. I think of the fact that I put about 40 hours of work in a week for somebody else's purposes. And it seems to be more and more important to me that I have some time to myself. It means to me that I can get in touch with myself, to sort of be able to pay attention to the things that come to me that I need to think about, to mull over. Like one of the things that comes to me when I have time is that I will start thinking about something – and then I have quite a large collection of books – and it will remind me of something in one of the books, and so I'll go read one of my books and work on it for a little bit more. And then I'll have to go to another book to read on it. Somehow it connects with me, although it's probably illogical. And it seems that through this process I come to some sort of integration with myself, or a more whole experience, in relation to something that's happened. Almost like an analysis, but not really an analysis because it's not logical, it just connects somehow. And that's the sort of thing I really value – is having time to do that. And I know it takes a period of not being interrupted. I do things that some of my friends find annoying, like I'll cut my phone off. Some of them are aware that I will do that and will call me and say, 'When you had your phone cut off, I was trying to call you,' and this kind of thing. And I'm not feeling as guilty about it as I have sometimes in the past. I realize that this process of exploring things in my own way is more real to me. The conclusions that I come to seem to be very valid. Like if it's a medical question, I'll go get out all my medical books, physiology books, drug books, and sort of mull it over and try to figure out what is happening – this is something that I've heard about. And I'm not sure but it seems to me at some point that I put a great deal of value on my own thinking as a result of this

> process. And tend to put down what other people think. I really don't like that part of myself all that much – that in a lot of cases I really don't take very seriously what a lot of people say. But I value the process I go through and I put sort of a heavy value on the conclusions I reach. The process isn't all that logical – I don't know how to describe it. It's more of getting in touch, just sitting there until I allow myself to sort of come up with what I think is going on, and then to explore that in terms of things that I've read in books, and so on. It's not very scientific, but afterwards I feel pretty sure about what I've concluded or come up with. At least to that point. But as I say, it does leave me with a feeling that a lot of the things that people say are not that true. And I often feel, 'Gee, I hope they don't feel that I'm putting down their opinion.' I don't know.

Elizabeth states that she values things that make her happy – activities which she enjoys because they have a deep and profound effect on her. Eighteenth century music and literature, which struggle with moral issues, have this effect. So does the ritual of the Catholic mass. Immersing herself in a good book or film, uninterrupted by anyone, also makes her happy. She wonders if her loss of freedom to have these experiences when she was married contribued to its failure.

> Some of the things that make me happy are – I often think of the eighteenth century, as a source of things – the music, the literature, and that kind of thing, of the eighteenth century, nineteenth century. Whatever they had then we seem to have lost. You can read some of the great literature with the people struggling with terrific moral questions, you know. I don't find that now in the current literature. It's almost considered to be archaic or obsolete or something. It's not fashionable to struggle over moral issues. And so when I read stuff like that I can really relate to it. And also the music. It seems to be part of the music too – very profound issues in a lot of the classical music, and you can very, very much feel it. I feel at home in that. I also feel at home at a Catholic mass, and I feel comforted by it – the ritual, the symbolic ritual thing. If you're very lucky, some of the music, the classical church music. And things like that. I feel very good when I'm part of that. But I always have this resistance in going to music or literature or mass, and sitting there just for the whole purpose of enjoying it. I have a certain hesitancy about feeling I should not do that, sort of a guilt about it. Because it's so personal, it's so excluding of other people. It's like if I want to go to a really good movie that I've read reviews of, I go alone, because I don't want anybody around me, asking for attention while I'm trying to understand the movie. And most people I go with want attention from me. I don't understand what that is all about but.... So I'll go alone, so I can immerse myself in the film. Those are things that to me are ends in themselves. They don't go anywhere, they're not for anybody else, they're just for me. And I think that some of the films that I go to see, I think are sort of a tie to the United States too. Because I'm so familiar with the culture, of what's happening in the United States. And I enjoy foreign films a lot – Italian, French and Swedish films, because in many of them there's the philosophical element. Also a very profound psychological element, symbolism, and just much more depth than I think you find in North American films. And those are times when I feel tremendous inner enjoyment, is when I'm with that kind of thing or music I enjoy or the book that I just relish reading. Like sometimes if I'm feeling very, very tired, I'll take a day off from work, unplug my phone and just read a book all day. And to me, I'll be in heaven – that's the closest thing I can think of to being in heaven. There's nobody bothering me. I can just relish my little book and read it all day with no interruptions. I don't know at this point in my life if I can ever think of living with another person. And I wonder if that thing of not being able to be alone to do this is what really destroyed my marriage, or my ability to adjust to my marriage.

Because I never had that freedom to go aside when I needed to go aside.

Natural beauty in nature and in people are also valued by Elizabeth for the effect it has on her. It distresses her that natural beauty is being destroyed in our society.

> I suppose I also value natural beauty. But I immediately think of all the problems of natural beauty, you know, the termination of it, the fact that it is so vulnerable to destruction. For example, I went to Hawaii a few years ago, and I would stay near the water to watch the sunset and then get up to watch the sunrise. And everybody else, it seemed, and I mean practically everybody else because there were very few people that did that, were in watching the stage shows and stuff like that. And I thought, 'Boy, you got to be kidding!' And yet that is what it was all about for some people – going there and living it up, and drinking it up and seeing this that somebody said, 'Oh, you must see this,' or some sort of a show, and things like that. I was astounded at how few people were there at sunrise, or at dusk watching the sun set. But it is absolutely gorgeous. If you ever go to Hawaii – it's beautiful! And then you have this thing where they have these yachts coming across the horizon at sunrise and sunset – just gorgeous! Really, really beautiful! It seems like we do so much to destroy that. And I remember being in Hawaii, sitting on the beach one day in the middle of the day, and there was an Hawaiian couple next to me and I was pretty far up from the water. And they had a little baby. And the baby walked down to the water, sort of stumbled down, and had a diaper on. They didn't pay any attention to it as it went down to the water. Pretty soon the diaper's off, diaper's floating away, you know, into the ocean and 'Oh well', could care less, 'baby seems to be having fun down there, that's just great.' Then comes this North American couple, probably U.S., coming with their child. Every second they were telling that child what to do, 'Go get that shell and we'll describe that shell to you,' you know and constantly picking at that child. Not a moment's peace did that child have. It was incredible! There was a wholeness and a quiet about that Hawaiian couple, and they were aware that the baby was safe enough, that it was happy, and that was enough. Didn't care if its diaper was going out to sea. And I could really relate to that, and I felt so sorry for that American child – constantly telling him what to pay attention to! Can you imagine? 'You must pay attention to this, you must pay attention to that.' And I'm sure in their mind they thought they were helping their child. See, that sort of natural thing that we seem to have lost, that's very, very important.

Travelling to other countries to broaden her understanding of people and to experience places which are meaningful to her is also part of what Elizabeth values. She emphasizes again that these experiences are for her alone – for the profound effect they have on her inner life. She sometimes perceives this as selfish on her part and either feels guilty about indulging herself or denies herself the experience.

> I used to think travelling was important, you know. I don't know. I think about it. Like I probably would have the opportunity in the future to travel. If I go away with somebody, like I have on a number of occasions, I'd feel responsible for them, for making the decisions, for organizing the day, for doing this and doing that. I feel like the whole responsibility is on me to do that, and to include their needs, their wishes in all of this. So it ends up that I take all of the responsibility, and their needs get met, and I feel very frustrated by that. On the other hand, I think, that it's getting fairly dangerous for a woman to travel alone, unless you stay in the hotel circuit, which can be deadly because it's so artificial. It almost takes travelling with somebody who has sort of a similar fantasy about what's important. I remember one trip that I took with a woman, it was a very thoughtful woman. We went to Nassau. And we got one of the cab drivers to take us to his home, in his little village

inside, and to his church, and to his little club, and stuff like that. And he did that for us. And that was so enlightening. It was dangerous – I was frightened, because they were all black, and because I didn't understand what was happening very much. But it was so valuable in understanding the way those people lived. There was sort of a voodoo religion, I don't know, I can't really say what the religion was, but you could feel the excitement about it, you know. But how many people can you find to travel with that will do that, and value it? That was a good experience travelling. I was going to go to Russia last year, to Moscow, alone, and I was all set to go except that they imprisoned a couple of the Russian dissidents. That bothered me very much, and I just didn't feel like I could go, which has turned my appetite off for travel to Russia. So I don't know. Maybe if I could get used to it, travelling alone, so I was more sophisticated about taking care of myself, I could do it. It seems like if you travel with a man, then his particular thing becomes overwhelmingly important. Like I spent three months in Europe travelling with a man, and his thing was art. And I learned a great deal about art. I went, I think, to every museum in Europe, or certainly every famous museum, and gradually could identify paintings that were thought to be very skillfully done. And that was his interest. I learned from it, but a lot of my interests didn't get – like I wanted to go to Lourdes, I wanted to see some of the things that had been historical in the Catholic church in Europe. It just didn't happen, because in very subtle ways my needs or my taste or my preferences were put down, as sort of naive, or trivial, or unimportant. So I went along with going to all the museums, which I suppose in a sense I value. But I never felt free to see what I wanted to see. In fact I didn't do much planning about it. So I think that it would be difficult for me to travel with a man. Like even when I went to Hawaii, I was with my husband and I would often go to the sunsets alone – my attendance at the sunsets! Because it wasn't really a shared thing, it wasn't that important. And then again, if you want to travel somewhere you almost have to spend an awful lot of time studying the history, if it's really going to be meaningful – study the history, read the literature of the people who have lived there for a long period of time, to have a sense for it. And then I think it can be very, very meaningful. But that again, I feel selfish doing that, that's for my own satisfaction, that I'm trying to set time aside for. I have conflicts about that one. Like for me, say I was to go to Vienna or something like that, which is something I would really like to do when they have their opera season. I would have to go back through their history so that I could understand what happened politically to them, and historicaly, and also study their architecture and a lot of things like that. And I know it would take a lot of time. And it would be *all for me*, so that when I got there I would have this emotional experience of actually seeing what I had been reading about. You know. Very selfish! But I would value that. Like all the stuff in archeaology, that is fascinating – like in South America or Mexico even. Some of the archeaological digs they've had and the things that they've found – I could spend a lot of time studying that stuff. I hesitate to do it. I suppose someday I might get over my hesitation. But I do value that kind of thing. I know the effect it can have on me, if I study something and I work myself up to seeing it finally, when I finally get there. It's like that movie, *The Elephant Man*. I read the story of the Elephant Man several years ago, and I remember being fascinated by it, and I read a lot of stuff about it, and then I went to this movie. It was a very profound experience. Because they did such a good job portraying him. That's another thing that I enjoy doing, is reading books related to movies and then seeing the movie, or vice-versa, seeing the movie and then reading the book.

Elizabeth wonders about her valuing of things she does alone. She questions how much she really values others, explaining that she feels degraded around people whom she perceives as 'tinny' – as treating themselves and others cheaply. That her need to be alone has been misunderstood by doctors as being lonely is typical, she thinks, of

doctor's practice of fitting people's experience into a model, only to distort it.

> But you know, all this stuff is alone. The stuff that I really, really enjoy doing profoundly, I like to do it alone. And I often wonder if I just really, you know, value people that much, or have the ability to start a relationship with somebody that would be like me, and understand that. I can be with a group of people and actually end up feeling – and I don't like this in myself – that they're not worth very much. Like I've gone to single clubs in Edmonton, and I end up feeling, 'These are not people that are worth very much. I don't want to know them.' And it's sort of a gut feeling. One of my phrases that I use to describe that is 'tinny,' which has meaning to me. 'Tinny people.' I don't know. Do you know what I mean? Something about a cheapness. And it's not that they're cheap, essentially, but they are living cheap lives, and they are treating each other cheaply, and the whole social system that's happening right there is cheap. And I just want to get away from there, because I feel degraded. What happens to me is I get very sarcastic and I suppose end up rejecting some people, because I can identify the fact that I think, 'This is awful!' Then I think, 'Oh well, I'm just being a snob, and here I think I'm better than these people.' What a bind! And I know it's not true. I know I'm not better than them; I just feel different; I can't do what they're doing. Maybe I should have been a hermit, or will be. It's like I told you, you know, the best year of my life was that year when I was alone, for a whole year. It was! It was the best year of my life. But I tell you, like I had some experiences! I would play Beethoven and I knew Beethoven was sitting in the room with me, while I was playing Beethoven. I told this to one of the doctors over at the Aberhart, about this experience of feeling so close to Beethoven that I was certain he was in the room, I just knew it, I could feel it. And you know what he said to me? He said, 'Oh, you must have been so lonely.' I didn't experience any loneliness! It wasn't a lonely thing for me! And I felt when he said that, that they've always got to distort my experience to fit into some little model they've got, you know. Like maybe I was, but I don't think so. It doesn't fit.

Concluding that she values her profound experiences and understandings, Elizabeth recalls how during her first two years of college she thrived on intellectual stimulation. The satisfaction she experienced in those initial years were lost to her once she began her nursing practicum, and she never quite regained it again. She believes that there is a connection between her values and her religious philosophy, which continues to be a central force in her life.

> But I value my profound experiences, and thinking, and understanding meaning. It's a big need. I remember, you know I told you about my first couple years in college. Those years were very, very good for me, because I was very deeply involved in all the intellectual things I was getting into, to the point – like it was a thirst in me, it was a drive, you know. And I would go to the library and they would shut the library, and they would have to tell me to go, this kind of thing. And I was reading St Thomas Aquinas, and very involved in that, and reading some of these Latin things because I had some knowledge from high school of Latin. And it was so exciting for me, doing this, and it just opened up a universe. And I can remember when I was into that so much, I didn't care about hardly anything – what I wore, who I saw, anything. It was just a drive. And I would get on the bus – they had trolleys in Washington, D.C. at that time – and go down to hear a symphony in one of the halls down in the center of Washington, and I was looking at the people on the bus, almost as sub-human, because I had so little connection with them. It was like they were talking in another language; they were a different breed. Do you know what I mean? And when I got into nursing I lost that.

> There no longer was the intellectual satisfaction. It became practical, it became a means to an end, no longer an end itself. But where that started originally, I don't know. And in a way, you know, I regret not having pursued it when I was in university. But I go back you know, like to university now – it isn't the same thing. Now whether I've changed or the university's changed or what, but . . . . And maybe it's because I haven't really got involved in anything that it's not there for me. There was some of it in the University of Washington, but then it lacked that stong philosophical, religious element, that was at the university when I was first going. But I think a lot of my values come from that. From my religion, and the philosophy attached to my religion.

Elizabeth's valuing of her profound experiences and the process she involves herself in to reach conclusions and find meaning seems a logical outgrowth of what she values in herself. She explains, in answer to the question, "What do you value in yourself?", that she values her mind and how she uses it to broaden her understanding and increase her consciousness of things going on around her. This means, she explains, that she feels and acts differently from the women in her office. For example, she doesn't take an interest in fashionable clothing. Further, recognizing sexism in her office she's likely to make feminist statements, and thus will be perceived as 'weird'. This she does not experience as negative, however. Rather, she's glad to be perceived as not fitting a preconceived image.

> And I suppose I value my mind. Like I don't think I'm more intelligent than other people; I think I'm used to using my mind more. Because of all my academic seriousness, you know in my years before. IQ–wise I don't think I'm all that more intelligent; I just think more, because I'm used to doing it. And I guess you could broaden that and say consciousness, you know. Awareness. That, I really value that. To a certain extent I think that it means that I'm not avoiding things. But then sometimes I astonish myself as to what I do avoid. Like I told you, when Joseph died I went up to the point of having somebody tell me about it, and refusing, absolutely refusing to consider it a possibility. All the signs were there, everything was there, and I would not admit it to myself. So I do avoid to a certain extent, I know that. One of the problems about this awareness thing is that I feel different than most people. A lot of women that I know will read fashion magazines and things like that, and put a lot of importance on their clothing and care a lot about what other people think of them. And I can't relate really well to that. I think that I can in the sense that I went through a phase when I was sort of like that, but in retrospect it seems to me a phase in my life where I was dishonest. That I was being artificial and putting on airs and things like that. Like one of the women in the office, I was talking to her and told her that somebody else had said about me that, 'Oh well, she has problems with people in the office.' And I said to her – she didn't know me very well so I thought it would be a good person to ask – and I said, 'Well, do you feel that way or have you been told that?' She said, 'No, the only thing I can say is that I have heard some people say that you were weird.' So I thought about that, and I thought, 'That's true, you know. That is very perceptive of them. I think that's accurate. I think I'm probably pretty weird.' But it didn't bother me, you see. What I was worried about was that people didn't trust me, or they thought I had violated them or something like that. In that sense have a problem. But being weird doesn't bother me. It's okay to be weird! Sometimes I'd rather be weird. And I think that some of that comes from the fact that I analyze things differently. And I'm forever making feminist statements about things, and recognizing the

> sexism in this and that and the other thing, and making men angry in the office. I won't give in when they try to convince me that I'm full of you-know-what. And they get more and more angry. So that I thought that was maybe what he was talking about. But she said that I'm weird, and that's acceptable to me, to be weird. Almost rather be weird, if you know what I mean. It's kind of a compliment in reverse.

Being conscious of how she is perceived by others does effect Elizabeth at other times, however. Asked, "What do you dislike in yourself?", she answered that sometimes she feels that she doesn't have a good sense of humor, that she's too serious. As she spoke it became apparent that the issue for Elizabeth was not that she disliked her sense of humor, but that she sees humor in different ways than others seem to. She doesn't want to be different from the way she is, but wonders if her life isn't more difficult for her, because she sees things the way she does.

> I think that I think sometimes that I feel like I don't have a good enough sense of humor either. A lot of people have said to me, 'Oh, you are so serious.' And I'm sure that's true. I'm sure for a lot of people that I'm 'too much', you know. And when I get into humor it tends to be the kind of thing where I go into absurdity, and I'll look at the ridiculousness of things. But some people can't understand that. It's still a kind of a heavy humor, when you're dealing with absurdity. And I wish at times that I had a better sense of humor. But I find it hard to laugh about a lot of things. I think, for example, wouldn't it be neat to sit back like a lot of people do and joke about the world situation? And I don't have too much ability to do that. Even some of these movies that people go see that are so funny - who's that Hollywood star that everyone just adores? There's one male; he's very macho - Burt Reynolds! Yeah, you'd be surprised how many people adore him. And you know I went to see a movie one time and the lines were around the block. And I got in and I looked at this movie and I was disgusted. And all these people talking up what a fantastic - I can't relate to it. Do you know what I mean? And so I feel like there's part of my sense of humor missing, because I do not find that man funny. Woody Allen I think is funny. And Peter Sellers too. But then it's the absurdity thing that I enjoy so much. Maybe my personality excludes the possibility of an appreciation of Burt Reynolds, you know, this kind of thing. I wouldn't like to change that, so that I could become the sort of person who likes Burt Reynolds. Do you know what I mean? Yet I wonder sometimes if I'm missing part of the human experience. That I don't share in that. I look at the millions of dollars that goes into those movies that he makes, you see, and I think, 'What a waste!' And not only 'What a waste,' but 'How degrading to people!' How it's holding up something to them as an ideal - that's really perverse in my view. A sort of a slap-happy view of life, where anything goes and macho, macho, macho! I don't know. No, I don't think that I'd like to be that kind of a person. But I do think that they have maybe an easier life than I do, you see. They can get up in the morning and think of being like Burt Reynolds, you see - whatever that entails!

Another part of being a woman for Elizabeth today is realizing how different her life is from a man's. She is aware that if she speaks the truth about her experience as a woman, she will be confronted with a hostile backlash from men - with judgment and blaming, which can be intimidating. She has been shocked to learn that the men she works with not only don't know about the abuse and exploitation that women suffer, but

they don't want to know and don't care. At the same time she is concerned that women demanding equal opportunity to be competitive and successful like men is not a satisfactory solution.

> Being a woman now means also that my life is much different than if I were a man. It means a lot of struggle. If I am going to speak the truth about my experiences as a woman, it means getting a lot of hostile backlash from men. Intimidation kind of things, such as, 'You don't know what you're talking about. It's women's fault that it's this way. Women really have all the power. You're being extreme! You're reactive! You don't make any sense.' I had a man say to me today, 'What you're talking about doesn't match my experience.' You know, how absurd! What experience has he had being a woman? You know. But all these kinds of things. Like I've been working in the Women's Bureau for my company. I spent a year studying the situation. I'd never really before put my mind to studying the situation that women are in, in an economic sense, so I've done a lot of that this year and the statistics are very, very bad. They're much worse than I expected. And so now men will ask me, 'What are your statistics?' So I'll bring out my statistics and I'll even say, 'Well just read them; I'd like to talk to you about them.' But they'll come back with this argument against the validity of the statistics. There has been no man that I have met that cares that women are as abused and as exploited and as degraded as those statistics say. They don't care! That's really a hard thing for me to take. I didn't realize that. I really didn't know. I thought maybe they just didn't know. Well, they not only do not want to know, but when they do know they don't care. It's a very difficult thing to say. I didn't think it was that bad. So it's like, where do you go from there? And in my own company I won't encourage women to become more outspoken than they feel comfortable being, because, well, who am I to ask them to go through the same sorts of things I've gone through? I don't know. In a way, in the sense of monitoring women's economic situation compared to men, I think that it'll be easier to deal with in years to come, because the statistics will be there. Lots and lots of statistics, from year to year. Nobody can say we're making progress when we're not making progress. We haven't had that good a body of statistics like that. But I don't know. The other bind is all this equal opportunity thing. It bothers me because if women become as competitive as men for the few positions in management so far, the ones that I see have to give up any sort of identity with feminism or the Women's Movement to do so. And then they have an invested interest in keeping women below them down. And they do it. So I'm not all that excited about equal opportunity. The only thing I think has to be worked on very much is equal pay for work of equal value. Because I don't see why, when the majority of men can work at average jobs and make a living wage, I don't see why the average woman can't do that too. Why do they have to compete for management jobs? I don't know. And I'm not sure that that's the answer, but nobody wants to deal with it.

In partial answer to the question, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?", Elizabeth speaks again of her awareness of the backlash against women in her office, which she perceives as getting worse. She explains that women as well as men are getting angry about women's promotions.

> But I feel, like in my position at work, the backlash is getting worse. The men are getting angrier. Some of the women are getting angry. Today some announcement was made of a woman's promotion to office manager. A woman in the office came up to me and said, 'Look at this! She's not qualified!' And you know, I looked at it and I said, 'Well, maybe all of her qualifications aren't down there. Also, management, which is run by men, may

> have decided not to publicize it, and to give a lot of people an opportunity. So maybe she was the most qualified in one or two offices.' Because that's one of the things they do, they waffle their policies. But you see her anger about this was more than that. Her anger is partly at the Women's Bureau. She wanted me to send a complaint to the Women's Bureau. What I had to do for her was tell her that she should write her complaint directly to the people that she thought would help. There's a big thing in the office right now, that women are being promoted in our company on the basis of tokenism. That men who are more qualified are being overlooked. There are a couple men that are extremely angry over this. And very reactive to anything that is given to a woman. It's getting worse. You know, I can feel it getting worse.

The backlash against women and what this means has had an impact on Elizabeth. Asked, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?", she explains that after hearing at a feminist conference that a lot of violence against women is part of this backlash, she went through a period of doubt about the worth of Women's Movement. Her conclusion, however, was that it is worthwhile, because the changes it proposes would be good for men and the world in general, as well as for women.

> You know I had a problem with it about two months ago. I went to the conference in Red Deer. And they made a point that a lot of the recent violence against women is coming from the Women's Movement. And I had never thought about that. And I thought, 'You know, that makes sense, and it's possible, because there's always a backlash. Particularly if we are becoming more powerful, there will be a stronger backlash.' And I thought about all these women who are innocent of this terrible participation in the Women's Movement, you know, the ones that want the status quo, who are suffering the violence along with the ones that are in the Women's Movement. And I went through a period where I thought, 'Maybe it's not worth it.' But I think it's worth it. I think part of the reason I think it's worth it is because men need it just as much as women, and the world scenario needs it, and all this kind of stuff. Yes, we're getting a backlash. We are.

That the issue of violence against women is a personal as well as political concern for Elizabeth is evidenced in her final response to the initial question, "What has it meant for you to be a woman?" She speaks of sensing that women are increasingly in physical danger, and of being continually aware of the possibility that she could be assaulted. She explains that she resents this being part of her consciousness and also resents having to be always careful, recalling that she hasn't always been so fearful. Further, she resents that women are often blamed, by men and other women, too, for their assault.

> I don't know – and this is just a small point – but lately I have become aware of the physical danger women are in. It has become something that's more a part of my life. And I sense that things are getting more dangerous for women, in terms of assault. I just now automatically check who's behind me all the time. If there's any question about being alone with somebody in the neighborhood or something like that, it's just become more of a possibility for me – possibility of suffering an assault. Maybe I just didn't admit it before, you know. And then, maybe its the increased publicity these kinds of

> things are getting in the newspapers, the increase in the number of women reporting them and stuff like that. I'm more aware of how much it goes on. I think at times also, I very highly resent – because you know I live alone, and I like having a lot of freedom, that's part of the reason I live alone – I don't like the fact that I have to be careful where I walk, what I wear, all that kind of thing. I often think, 'Gee, it must be really nice if you didn't have to do that. You could walk out onto the street anytime you wanted and wear anything you wanted to wear and you'd be safe.' You know. But that's just not the situation, and I have a feeling it's getting worse. I don't know why. That, I think,sort of ties in with what I said before, that I hope we're not going backwards. They mentioned that at the ASWAC conference – the feeling that some women have is that some of the violence against women, or the increase in violence, is a backlash against the Women's Movement. I thought about it at some length, because it's still a minority of women that are outspoken feminists, you know, and a lot of the women that are suffering the backlash, if it is a backlash, are innocent of any kind of political strivings or anything. And that's pretty uncomfortable – to think that you might be contributing to it. I don't know. I don't think that I could go back, because I think that going back would be very dishonest. I couldn't do it. Maybe I could be quieter. I think I could be quieter and more private in my communication about the truth. But I don't like the fact that it's getting worse. And then I too am getting more sensitive to things like the fact that most men and many women blame the women for their assault. 'They shouldn't have been walking there! They shouldn't have been wearing that!' Somebody said that to me the other day and I said, 'You're saying that a woman who dates a man is asking to be raped? Because a lot of these rapes occur on dates. Knowing that, if a woman accepts a date, is she then asking to be raped?' This was a man and he said, 'Well, you're being very extreme. You're always taking everything I say to extremes.' And I said, 'I don't see it as extreme. It affects me. I don't go home with anybody or go anywhere with anybody unless I've known then for a long time. It's just out of the question.' I can't remember being that cautious when I was younger. And some of the women that I've talked to about it, even that are not at all feminist, say that they too are more fearful than they ever have been. So that's pretty uncomfortable. I don't think I'm the type that can take judo. Maybe I should become the type. But I can't think of anything else that is really important to me in my experience of being a woman.

Asked, "In what ways have you experienced yourself as powerless?", Elizabeth explains that she feels powerless in the face of violence on the world scene. She despairs at the power of multi–nationals to produce and sell harmful pesticides, the growing gulf between developed and third world countries, the growing threat of nuclear disaster and the developing of sophisticated methods of chemical and biological warfare. She explains that she copes with her powerlessness in the face of this insanity by taking power over her own consciousness – taking control over her own life. She wonders, however, at the inevitability of global destruction if most people accept the status quo.

> I feel powerless I think in terms of the world scene. I think things are deteriorating. I feel powerless to make any difference in that deterioration. When I think about trying to spend my energy to make a change, I think I'll have to give all my energy to that. And I think I go through periods when I actually do that. You know, I give all my energy to some cause. And then I realize after a few months, it's not making any difference. I'm getting overtired, I'm not paying any attention to my own needs. So I go back and start taking care of my needs, and realize that I have no impact on the world scenario, you know. It's gonna proceed at it's own pace, for whatever

> reasons. It's like this pesticide issue that I was dealing with. I've gotten to the point where I don't think it's going to make any difference. I think the multi-nationals are very, very strong. They will remain in power, and what do you do with that? I don't know. What I try to do, and what I try to convince other people to do is to take responsibility for their own consciousness. And to realize that even if the world does go to hell, and we have a third world war, or we all poison each other to death, or whatever is going to happen in terms of destruction of human life, that they still have a responsibility to live fully, as much as they can, as far as they can. And then I think, 'Well, if everybody thinks that way, then we aren't going to have any improvement on the world scene.' But I read the statistics - most of the world is third world; most of the population is the third world countries, living at a very primitive level - that the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer. And the nuclear potential increases by billions of dollars every year, and is constantly being upgraded so that we can kill more people faster. And the chemical warfare is developing to new heights of sophistication, not to mention biological warfare. It's insane! You know? It really is insane! And I don't feel capable of doing anything about it. That's really being powerless, you know. So then I transfer it and say, 'Okay, well then I'll take power over my own consciousness and continue to develop that. At least I can have some influence there.' I don't know. And like I said, I have come to the conclusion that most of the human race wants the situation. Like I try not to do anything to contribute to it, myself. And I feel that if all those people that are contributing to it or who are not trying not to contribute to it, want the status quo, then indeed we must have the status quo. And we have a sort of time bomb within our genetic code which is going to blow us - maybe we do. I don't know. A self-destruct.

Asked, "What do you think about this saying: 'It's a man's world'?", Elizabeth explains that she perceives that the world is on a self-destructive course because men are in power and have control. She explains again that she is distressed that the men she works with don't care about the situation of women, and that they blame women for the abuse they suffer. She wonders at the irony of men putting down women on the one hand, and on the other seeking them for support.

> Yeah. And that's why it's gonna self-destruct. Because they are in power. And this is what they created, this is what they want, this is what they need. I think it's insane! And I think they have control. I don't think it's going to change. I really don't. And part of the reason is I don't think enough women are out there. Like I think if all women, everywhere, refused to take care of these men who are promoting this self-destruction, it could make a difference. But I don't think they will. I think it is a man's world, yeah. Just open the newspapers. Crime - who's commiting it? Men. One whole section of sport - whose sports? Men's sports. You hear on the radio, you hear the news as interpreted by men, talking about the fantastic things that men are doing, in terms of insane ends. It's just all around you. They are in power, you know. And you know a lot of men say to me, 'Oh well, we're oppressed too.' 'Well you know, that's very hot stuff, because you already have enough power to change that. You have more power than I do. Why don't you start doing something about it?' 'Oh no, it would be so much better if you did it,' you know. Like the Women's Bureau thing - we need the Women's Bureau to help the men. Like they wanted to change the name so that it will be the Equal Opportunities Bureau, or something like that. And men will be admitted. And I have told then very quietly, 'The minute that that happens, I'm out.' I have no time, anymore, to take care of any men. Because I haven't met any men that care anything about the plight women are in - not enough to put their money on the line, or their resources on the line. It shocks me that they don't care! And it's something that I've had to deal with this year because I've

> presented more and more data to these men that is more and more convincing and more and more shocking. They don't care! And furthermore, unless you didn't know it before, it's all our own fault. And then of course, you know, you can bring up the fact that the world is in the sad shape it is in and these men have been in power all the time, and how did it possibly get this way if they're so great and so superior? And they say, 'Oh well, women wouldn't do any better.' And they'll cite somebody back in history who was a murderess, you know, as representative of all women, ignoring the fact that crime is not primarily committed by women. Women have their little problems. Like I can understand a certain amount of the shop-lifting that's done by women. Well, personally, I can't get too excited about that. Because I don't think it hurts anybody, particularly much. And I think it's the result of a lot of anger, against the system that they're promoting. If women were in power, according to them, we would have a much worse world. On the other hand, when they're in trouble, who do they come to for help?

Comparing herself to the men she works with, Elizabeth perceives herself as stronger than them. They come to her with their problems, she explains, unable to fight against their own particular oppression. One man who claims to have been working for 10 years on understanding and changing himself seems to her to be very alienated from his feelings. She concludes there is little likelihood of meeting a man she could love, for most of them require being taken care of or being educated, and she has neither the interest in or energy for either task.

> In a way, as strange as it may sound, being a woman means being stronger than a man. Because now I'm the Women's Bureau representative in my office, and you would be surprised the number of men that come to me to tell me their little problems. And the bigger the problem, the more the come. Why don't they go to men? And they say to me, 'We need to have men in your organization.' Then I think we would be in the postion again of taking care of men. They don't have the ability of taking care of each other. It seems like if you're strong, then you have even more and more men wanting you to take care of them. I'm very impressed with their fragility. But you see, I look at their situation and I say, 'Well, if you stood up against it and you fought the oppression that you're experiencing, you're way ahead of us, as women, already. So why don't you do that?' But you see, they won't do that. They would rather come to me and ask me to take care of them, and do it for them, fight against their oppressors, salve their little wounds, and all that kind of stuff. Again, it seems to me a situation where I would take the risk of taking care of people, and I don't think it's good for them. They can stand up for themselves. All these men tell me, 'You don't want to be in my position.' Yeah, that's probably true, I don't. But why come to me to fight their fight? I don't want to become another mother-figure to the world. I see a real danger in that. As far as my relationship with men goes, I don't feel very optimistic about meeting a man with whom I can have a close love relationship. Not because I haven't had the opportunity or anything like that. I just haven't seen any of these men around. And how much energy do I have to educate a man? I don't know. I think perhaps the man would have to do a lot on his own to educate himself against his cultural training and against his stereotypes, that kind of thing. And maybe that's a function of my fatigue right at the present moment. I don't know. Because I just think that's too much. And then again, I'd be taking care of him. So I don't know. There's one man at work that says he's been working for 10 years on being less macho and more understanding of the discrepancies and so forth. I see him as very macho, and I think, '10 years and this is where you are?' He's very alienated from feelings, you know. Very much so! Or so he seems to me. Maybe he has to be that way to succeed in his job. I don't know. Maybe

> personally it's gone a long ways. But I don't know about that part of my identity – how it's going to evolve, at all. It doesn't bother me very much, I have to say that.

Though not feeling particularly optimistic about the world scene at present and in the next few years, Elizabeth explains that she does not feel threatened or anxious about it. She relates this to her consciousness of life as a 'becoming' rather than as a static picture of what *should be*. This means to her that while she does not have the security of believing in any one world view, she is free to understand that we all have our own versions of reality, and that she, herself, is free to grow and change. She also believes that reductive thinking, which leads to one correct answer, is inadequate for understanding the human experience.

> I was talking to you before about the male stereotype of succeeding and finishing the project and meeting the deadline and all that kind of stuff. I don't see any of that happening in our evolution. I'm not even sure that it should happen. It seems more reasonable to say that we are all becoming, we all grope around to try to figure out what we should be becoming, to try to have some sort of influence on what we're becoming. But none of us knows for sure. You know I know that. And we don't know what tomorrow's going to bring. There's an expectancy and sort of a mystery about it – you don't know. Whatever it is, I feel right now in my life that I am more capable of entering into it and growing with it, whatever it is that's going to happen. And I haven't really felt that way before. I've felt threatened or anxious. And I don't think I feel threatened or anxious now. I feel expectant to a certain extent. Not a great deal of optimism, for sure, like about the next 10 years. But it seems as a woman you are free to release yourself from identifying with a plan. So you can respond to what is going on, and what's becoming. And your consciousness can keep growing. I was talking to my grandmother a couple weeks ago. And I was shocked to realize how at 83, how very little she knows about herself; how much she lives through other people; how little of herself she gives; how little self-awareness she has to give. And I thought to myself, you know, 'I don't want to be that way.' And I felt secure that that will never happen to me. When I get letters from my mother, I realize she's stuck. She's in this sort of same rigid box my grandmother's in. She can't get out. Her life is like trying to reinforce that her view of the world is correct. And so I feel good about the fact that I don't have a really distinct view of the world. It's sometimes very confusing and very uncertain. But it almost seems like you know as a woman, when you don't have that set of stereotypes, you have the advantage of being able to enter into someone else's world, on a really deep feeling level, and growing through their experiences. They can tell you and you can feel them. Because you don't have to say, 'Oh, it should be that way,' or 'This is what it is,' or define it. You can just recognize it as another person's reality. And I think that that's something women have that men don't have. They seem to always be classifying everything into good or bad, giving it a number on a scale of 10, or evaluating, constantly justifying their own view of the world, constantly being threatened by another view of the world that's different from theirs. Do you know what I mean? It's such a waste of energy! It's so stupid! I don't know how much this enters into their being isolated, and I think it would be so lonely. To constantly judge every other person in terms of your own ego, and how they make you look to the world. Like who cares? It's very, very sad. Being free of that makes me feel really good. Somebody said something to me today about having had this little incident in class, where he had to evaluate five people – better or worse, good or bad, or whatever. He wanted me to take the exercise. And I just

> practically blew up. I said, 'I refuse! I am not evaluating anybody! In terms of good or bad, or better or worse, or anything like that. They're different! It would be interesting to know a little about them.' And I said to him, 'Does anybody in your class refuse to do this exercise of evaluating?' He said, 'No.' Can you believe it? A whole group of people agreed to evaluate other persons. That's awful! It's hard to believe too, because you know it centers you back in yourself and *you* become the criteria for what is good. *Your* value system becomes that all-important that you can lay it on another person. It's just awful! And you think of people living their whole life like this?. It's dreadful! That much I'm out of. That I thank God for. Along with it comes a great uncertainty. Like I don't know anything, for sure, about anything. I sense a certain response that I think is true, 'Yeah, this is my response,' but I'm not so sure that my ideas are all that correct, and they'll probably change, and you do the best that you can. But it frees me from saying somebody else's idea is wrong. Do you see? See, this is really, really important to me. When I went through this Eastern thing I came into what I call the 'either/or error.' That was my thing that I developed. And then I remember going to Grant MacEwan and they would constantly talk about, 'Is it genetic or is it environment? Is it this or is it that?' And I'd say, 'You can't think this way. This is retarded! It's always all those things! It's just a matter at one point in time, maybe it's just a little bit more of one than the other. Plus a lot of other things that you're not aware of.' They reduce things, you know. Reductive thinking. But you see, then, if you do that, reductive thinking, you can't evolve. It gives you some sort of security, I suppose, but it must be very lonely and very useless. Pointless. So that much I'm beyond.

One of the benefits to Elizabeth of becoming conscious that the stereotypic masculine values of achievement and success are not superior is that she feels freer to be spontaneous and have fun. She also feels freer to define her own morality in a particular situation. Further, she expects that her experience as a woman will continue to change with time. Although she would like to make peace with her family, she thinks the possibility of a reconciliation is only slight.

> There's another thing, well, it isn't so much an element of my life, because I've been brought up very much in the male stereotypes. Like I fit myself into them before. But I've been thinking lately about what the opportunity of leaving those stereotypes gives to me in terms of being more spontaneous. And having more fun. And not feeling that I have to achieve and be successful and all that kind of thing. But to live my days for what I can find in my days, without constantly making them only worthwhile in so far as they bring me further toward my goal. So it seems to me as I leave more and more of the male stereotypes, that I can find more value in the moment. Meaning and value, as an end in itself, not as a means to another end. I must have started that some time ago, because I think that was what frustrated me so much in my marriage. Everything was geared towards a goal. And I at some point recognized that we would never reach the goal. There would always be a new goal, you see, a postponing of living till we got that final goal. But we were never going to get that final goal, so were constantly postponing living and that kind of thing. But other than that, I'm sure that my experience of being a woman is going to change as time goes on. It's just not very rigidly defined for me. I hope at some point – and I'm not really tied to it – that I can make some sort of peace with my family. And have some sort of relationship with them where I don't feel diminshed. I have a feeling it's just not there. The possibility's just not there. So I'm not really, you know .... One of the things I did a couple of weeks ago that meant a lot to me – it was shortly before New Years – I called my grandmother. I haven't talked to her for a long time, and she's 83. And I talked to her for about half an hour. And I taped the conversation. And I listened to it again, and I could hear a

> great deal more than the first time, you know, when I was really into it. I could hear more. And I don't know if I would ever be able to share it with anybody in my family, because I wouldn't want my grandmother to become an object. Like she assumed that was a private conversation. But I listened to it several times and heard a lot of things. I feel freer to do things like that now, that I never would have done before. Almost like the freedom to define my own morality in the situation. For myself I defined that it was private to me, and that the tape was okay because it would be private. And in times past I would have waited for someone else to define if that was a moral thing to do. And I'm sure that there are people that would say, 'No! Poor woman, she's 83 years old and her granddaughter's taping her. There's just no more respect in the world.' But I thought, 'To hell!' And all I can say is, 'Thank God I won't end up like her.' She controls people. Defines them. Controls them. And I suppose I did that too, for a period of time. But you see, I'm out of it. And when that guy says to me, 'I want you to rate these people as good or bad,' my upbringing is such that I could have applied all my philosophy and ethics to rate them. But you see I felt as though I'm really out of it. I didn't have to think about it; I just knew that's not possible – you don't do that.

Another aspect of being a woman for Elizabeth is feeling close to and valuing women. This is based, she explains, on being able to understand and empathize with women's reality, which means to her experiencing truth and beauty. In contrast she perceives the men she knows as being untruthful and unreal in an attempt to impress each other.

> Being a woman today also means I think, and this is very important to me, that I can be closer to people I value. And those are women. And that I can understand what they are talking about better than men can. Because what they are talking about means more to me. I don't see it as some sort of put-on or a front or a cover-up or a facade. It's very real. Whereas men, when they start talking, talk about a lot of stuff that's not very real. I know it's not very real. Now they will say, 'It's real!' But I think even underneath they know it's not real. So that you have a lot of men talking to each other about unreal things, like their salary, their sex-life, their favorite sports. You know, even factually, a lot of what they say is not factually true. It's not important, for sure, but the facts are all confused. I had somebody ask me to write up his resume, and I did it, and he said, 'By the way, you know that's not my real salary. It's much more, but they can't check on it.' And stuff like that. And I thought about it and I thought, 'Well, maybe they do that all of the time.' They're trying to impress each other, which is such a waste of energy. But you see, as a woman you're really free of that, if you choose to be. Because there are a lot of women now that want to get out of it. I think there are women that play games, and there are women that want to play into the system and live up to whatever is necessary to be successful in the system. But there are a lot of women that want to get out. And I think that that's really important. What is happening to men? I don't know. But for me, to be close to women, like that means truth, I think. The whole thing of truth and beauty has always been very much intertwined in my mind since I was very young. Like I've always felt that you couldn't have one without the other. Once you deviate from the truth it becomes ugly. Like I look back to that thing about music, because music is very important to me. If I can't be on a wave-length of truth with another person, and it's much easier with women, then I can't hear music. I can't relate to anything that's real. So being with women and being able to really be on a very truthful level, I think it changes my whole life. It changes everything. Everything seems to become more simple. You know what your priorities are; you know what is important, what's happening.

How important the truth is to Elizabeth becomes clear as she explains that in her family

the truth was never told. She describes an incident of her brother's funeral, after he had committed suicide, explaining how her family refused to face the reality of his life or his death. It is easier for Elizabeth to speak the truth today, she maintains, because she is a woman.

> In my family, for all the time that I've been a member of my family, the truth has never been told. Never! I used to think that my family was unique. But I have been finding out more and more since I've been thinking about it and talking to other women about it, it's not unique. There are lots of families where the truth is not spoken. The most blatant example I can think of right this minute was my brother's death. My youngest brother suicided. I went to his funeral. I hadn't been with him for I think three years because I was in Canada, married. I didn't know what his last years were like. I wanted to know. The explanation my family came up with for his death, his suicide, was that he was on a vegetarian diet. When I attempted to talk about the other things – how he was feeling, what kind of conflicts he was dealing with, what his needs were, this kind of thing, there was no response. And it was not only no response, it was sort of a punitive thing of, 'How dare you bring these things up! You are making waves!' To this day the truth is not spoken about that. Let me tell you another thing, that sort of symbolizes. I went to Seattle for my brother's funeral. His body came on a bus – he was in Oregon at the time. To die he climbed a very high power pole, in the midst of a group of people, and dove off head first onto concrete. His head was not open but there were cuts. What happened to him was that his neck was very, very badly broken, so he was disfigured. His body came to Seattle and was in the funeral home. So I went down – there were a couple of people from my family, my mother for sure and I think somebody else. And I told the funeral director that I wanted to see him, and I wanted to see him alone. So they left. I asked my family, 'Do you want to come with me?' They said, 'No.' So I went to see what his wounds were, you know, everything. And nobody else ever did. I couldn't believe it! Just no facing of reality! Anyway, that is something that I have escaped from now. But it's easier for me as a woman. It's a common woman experience. How many women are speaking the truth? I don't know. But I have that option, you see, and that's very important.

How did Elizabeth come to learn that she had the option of speaking the truth? By fighting, she explains – by fighting the church and whoever attempts to define for her what her reality is or *should be*. When she stopped calling herself crazy and realized the world around her was crazy, she began to fight back and speak the truth about her own experiences. This has resulted in her feeling more confident in herself – in her perceptions and her choices. She realizes there are consequences for speaking the truth (she may lose her job, for example) but this does not deter her.

> I learned about my option by fighting, I think. Fighting against all of the people, all the institutions in society, everybody who says that you don't. Like I fight with my church all the time, because I don't accept their definition of truth anymore. I will accept my own definition and certainly it will change as time goes on. But they will not tell me what to do, or how to think, or what to believe is true. I think that took a lot of fight on my part. I think that when I stopped calling myself crazy, and started looking at the world I am living in, and started looking at the behavior of sane people – you know, it's in light of my experience – you can't escape the truth, and a lot of that's insane.

> Because it doesn't make any sense and it doesn't matter, what a lot of people are spending their lives doing. I think I went through periods of anxiety about it, you know. But I don't feel anxious about it now. I think I told you some time ago that I had reached the point where there was no option to go back. I realized there would be no pull back, there would be no falling by the wayside and going backwards. It was just too late. In some sense you know, I think, 'Oh, wouldn't it be lovely if we could all be the feminine ideal, and wait for Prince Charming, and all that kind of stuff.' What a fantasy! But it's so immature! And so unreal! And degrading! That I don't think that there is any pull in that direction anymore, thank God! And I don't feel anxious about my choices anymore. I think something that you taught me was very, very important to me, and that was listening to my guts. I listen a lot better now, you know. And that has enriched my life, because it is the source of a lot of truth. It's the sort of thing where I would go along before, when I was not listening to anything inside of myself, and something would happen and I would feel sort of uncomfortable, but I would shove it aside. And now when I do that, and I sort of feel uncomfortable, I'll recognize it and I'll say to myself, 'I hope I can get clearer on what it is that's going on.' And I pay attention and give it a chance to develop. And that's really exciting! But I don't think that it's going to be easy. I had a woman tell me, not too long ago, that if I pursued some of my projects at work, that I would be destroyed. And I asked her how that was going to happen, and she explained to me how it would happen. And it is a possibility. But you see, the destruction's all economic. So her category of being destroyed was all economic destruction. And yeah, I could probably be destroyed economically.

The complexities for Elizabeth of being a woman today is summarized in her answer to the question, "What do you think about the Women's Movement?" She explains again that she feels at peace reading feminist literature because it is the truth, she feels she no longer has to struggle and she is not alone. The Women's Movement has also made Elizabeth conscious of women's oppression and its ramifications. Although she perceives that men do not care about stopping women's oppression, and that violence against women is on the increase, she believes that when women start valuing themselves men will have to change. She, therefore, will continue to support and promote women's issues. At the same time she realizes that she is not willling to sacrifice her personal life for total political involvement, having learned the hard way that she needs to take care of herself.

> But you see when I read the stuff from the Women's Movement, I feel peaceful. It's like resting, because you don't have to fight for the truth to be said. There is somebody saying it. You don't have to feel you're strange, because somebody else has had a similar experience to you. Somebody is aware of what you're aware of.
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> But on the other hand, like Marjorie Tuitte was saying, 'Once you become dedicated to the Women's Movement, you lose your luxuries. You can no longer miss a meeting, you can no longer not turn up at a rally, you can no longer do this, that and the other thing.' I don't feel personally capable of living that way. I don't know that I can. And the other problem is, if you spend all your energy in that way, what happens to you? Your own development, you know? I don't know. I think it's gone too far – like the Women's Movement has gone too far to go backwards. The papers are full of it. Just full of it!
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> But you know, when you talk about the Women's Movement, I think that the

most exciting thing about it for me is getting to and understanding significant feelings I haven't faced before. Meanings that I never recognized. The whole thing of oppression of women – it took me a long time to recognize that. I just took it for granted that, 'That's the way life is.' I never said 'That's wrong! It is diminishing. It is preventing growth. It is preventing self-esteem. It's preventing freedom. It's preventing everything.' I just took it for granted, 'That's real. That's life. That's reality.' I'm not very optimistic about men in this regard. At my present point I haven't seen any men that I really feel have gotten through it, and stopped oppressing women. But then when I see how much men do not care about the fact that women as a group are so oppressed, I realize how difficult it's going to be for them to change. But I think as more and more women start valuing themselves, men are going to have to change. The women just won't take it anymore. They will have to change. Meanwhile, what do we have? Violence in the streets, 'As we try to put them back in their place. How dare they step out?' You know.
So I'm going to stay with it. I will promote it and support it and participate as much as I can, but I won't destroy myself in the process. I know that. Because I'm not so sure it's worth it. Because like I say, if most women – and most women are not part of the Women's Movement, I think, at least the women I know – if most women don't want that change in society, I'm not so sure that a minority should force something. Maybe it's a process of being patient enough to let it take its time to actually change the way people are looking at things. But I have no reservations about what the Women's Movement is doing.